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DUELLING STORIES
OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY





HENRY III., AFTER FRANÇOIS CLOUET.

From Niel : *Portraits des Personnages Illustres du 16^{me} siècle*. Paris, fol., 1856.

[Frontispiece.]

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FROM THE FRENCH
OF BRANTOME

BY
GEORGE H. POWELL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

A. H. BULLEN
47 Great Russell Street:

LONDON: MCMIV



Mr. [illegible]

[illegible]

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INTRODUCTION

THE original Memoir here first presented to the English reader forms one of the most singular contributions extant to the social history of the latter half of the sixteenth century. As a collection of sensational anecdotes of real life, it may be said to stand entirely by itself in continental literature.

To Brantome, in his capacity of biographer, we are indeed largely indebted for our knowledge of many of the celebrities of this period, when the enthusiasms of the Renaissance and the Reformation had lost their freshness, when the diseased remains of Chivalry were dying out in an atmosphere of treachery, violence, debauchery, and fanaticism, while France, torn by complex factions, was struggling through the dark and stormy phases of the Religious Civil Wars.

Of the many distinguished chroniclers and memoir-writers of the time, few were more actually and intimately acquainted with the matter which they describe; and none could be less affected—in the words of a well-known critic—"by the indignation that would exaggerate or the scruples that would conceal" the vices and follies of their contemporaries.

Of the domestic morals of a generation "*dont c'était le propre d'allier la licence avec l'activité*,"¹ Brantome has left a special and elaborate study—also couched in

¹ *Caboche*, Introduction to the Memoirs of Margaret de Valois, the friend and contemporary of our author.

the form of anecdotes—which is perhaps his best-known work. It will be a sufficient introduction—for the moment—of the *Discours sur les Duels*,¹ if we say that it forms a suitable pendant to the *Vies des Dames Galantes*, as an equally light-hearted “chronique scandaleuse” of the “out-of-door” habits and ethics of the male sex.

The author, if he does not aspire to the dignity either of a moralist or of a serious historian, is, it will be seen, on his own subjects a first-hand authority of unique human interest.

Pierre de Bourdeille, Abbot and Lord of Brantome and Baron of Richemont, Chevalier of the Order (of the Holy Spirit), Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles IX. and Henry II., and Chamberlain to the Duke d'Alençon, was born in the year 1542.

Brought up in early youth at the Court of Queen Margaret of Navarre,² he was sent to study at Paris, and destined at an early age for the Ecclesiastical Order. In fact, he already held several benefices before being presented by Henry II. to the Abbey of Brantome in 1556.

Such resources enabled him to travel in Italy (1557-8), where he witnessed several combats, and was present in Rome (1559) at the interregnum following the death of Paul IV. Indeed, from this date onwards he appears to have led a life as full of enterprise, activity, and adventure as can be imagined.

¹ More correctly *Anecdotes de la Cour de France sous les Roys Henry II., Francois II., Henry III., and Henry IV.* As, however, many of the stories concern other Courts and countries, and earlier periods, this precision is a trifle pedantic.

² Margaret de Valois, the first (1549), author of the *Heptameron* (1559), and one of the most famous women of the Renaissance. Brantome's father, Francois de Bourdeille, is said to figure in one of her stories under the name of Simontaut (*Heptameron*, ed. F. Frank, Paris, 1879).



GASPARD DE COLIGNY, AFTER FRANÇOIS CLOUET.

From Niel : *Portraits des Personnages Illustres du 16^{me} siècle*. Paris, fol., 1856.

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On his return to Paris he became attached to the Court (1559-60) as an adherent of the Guises, the Duke Francis being related to his unfortunate uncle, La Chastaigneraye, so often mentioned in the *Duelling Stories*.

In 1561 Brantome was one of the suite selected to accompany the Princess Mary to Scotland ; and, returning by London, he took the opportunity of visiting the English Court.

On the renewal of the Civil War in France he served (1562-3) at the taking of Blois and the sieges of Bourges, Rouen, and Orleans, where Francis, Duke of Guise (the brother of Brantome's first patron) was assassinated.

His travels abroad extended to Barbary, where he took part in the siege of Velez, and received the "Order of Christ," on his way home visiting the Court of Spain.

The next year (1565) we find him sailing with the Baron d'Ardelay, some thirty gentlemen and eight hundred men, to the relief of Malta, where the Knights of St. John were undergoing the famous siege at the hands of the Turks. He was entertained there by the Grand-master of the Order for some three months, and returning by way of Italy, spent a month at Milan, and took the opportunity of getting some lessons from the famous fencing-master Tappe. At Rome he would seem to have enjoyed himself after his fashion. It was there that he made acquaintance with a relative bearing the same name and arms, a rich Neapolitan, Count Giovanni di Bourdella.

Visiting the Court of Savoy, he discussed with the Duke the trouble in Flanders. A few years later we are told that Chatillon¹ wished to employ Brantome in

¹ Gaspard de Coligny, Seigneur de Chatillon, Marshal and Admiral of France (1517-1572).

a descent upon that coast, but his own career was cut short by the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve. Our author had at this date abandoned the title of "Abbé," while judiciously retaining the emoluments attached to the position, and was known as the "Seigneur" de Brantome.

In 1567, at the call of Charles IX. he assisted in raising forces against the Huguenots, and fought at St. Denis, occupied Chartres with his troops, and subsequently held Peronne, which, it appears, he refused to betray in spite of tempting offers made to him by his friend Theligny, on behalf of the Prince de Condé and Chatillon, a fidelity for which he was rewarded by a post in the Royal Household as Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to the Duke of Orleans (afterwards Henry III.), with a salary of six hundred livres.

It was about this time that, during a fête at Court upon the river—a further example of his versatile activity—Brantome rescued from drowning the Baron de Montesquiou, Captain of the Duke's Guard, the same who afterwards shot the Prince de Condé in cold blood, when the latter was taken prisoner at the battle of Jarnac (1568).¹

After that campaign he retired for a time to his "Virgin Abbey," so styled because the Huguenots had uniformly spared it, a fact attributable to Brantome's friendly relations with Henry of Navarre, and the connection of his family with Coligny's wife, Charlotte Daillon.

On the marriage of his admired princess, Margaret,² to Henry of Navarre, Brantome had the honour of accompanying her entry into Bordeaux, and even of

¹ D'Aubigné, *Histoire Universelle*, sub anno.

² Marguerite (2) de Valois, la "Reine Margot." Born 1553; daughter of Henry II., and first wife of Henry IV.; divorced 1599; died 1615.



FILIPPO STROZZI, AFTER FRANÇOIS CLOUET.

From Niel: *Portraits des Personnages Illustres*.

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sitting near her on the platform from which she replied to the congratulations addressed to her with an eloquence which, he tells us, charmed and delighted the Queen mother.

Though holding no military rank, he next took part as an unpaid volunteer in the famous siege of Rochelle, of which, besides his own thrilling adventures and hairbreadth escapes, he records several interesting details. It was on this occasion that he presented to the King of Navarre the *first arquebus that prince had ever used*. It had been manufactured at Milan, and was a light and handy weapon decorated with "*or moulu*."¹ Brantome had received it from his dear friend Strozzi.

At the close of 1574 Brantome and his brother the

¹ Filippo Strozzi (1541-82), who is said to have first introduced the use of the musket at this siege, was a colonel in the French Guards, a distinguished soldier and adventurer, and an intimate ally of Brantome's, until a serious quarrel separated them. Apropos of what is said of firearms (here and in the text *passim*), it may be mentioned that the heavy arquebus (*haken-büchse*), having usually a wheel-lock, and fired from a fork or support, came into use, according to the explicit statement of Du Bellay, at the time of the siege of Parma in 1521. "*De ceste heure furent inventées les harelquebouses qu'on tiroit sur une fourchette*." These were simply clumsy "guns," discharged by means of a wheel-lock or (as in the case of those used on the ramparts at Parma) by a lighted fuse. The name, of course, indicates the cumbrous species of "box" out of which the earliest firearms were gradually developed into something slimmer and more portable. The musket (*mousquet*, *mæschetus*, a sparrowhawk—cf. *Falconet*—these instruments being commonly named after beaked animals) was known in the time of Francis I.; a long and heavy one, fired from a rest, being in use at the battle of Pavia (1525). Brantome—a chief authority on the matter—says that the Duke of Alva first brought them into popular use (so far as his own side were concerned) in the Netherlands (1567) and Strozzi into France (1573), as here described. Pistols were used by the Germans at least as early as 1544, the most primitive having a wheel-lock. They were commonly used in Brantome's time, and are frequently mentioned by him.—See *Cheruel*, *Diet des Coutumes*, and *Memoirs of Du Bellay and La Noue*.

Vicomte were employed to negotiate terms with the Huguenot party under La Noue.¹ Their services were rewarded by the grant of a nomination to the bishopric of Périgueux, to which they appointed François de Bourdeille. At the death of Charles IX. (1574) both Brantome and his friend Strozzi assisted at the post-mortem examination held on his body, by which it was decided that His Majesty had died not from poison, but, in the opinion of the royal physician, Ambroise Paré, from excessive exertions in blowing the horn when out stag-hunting! Brantome also was one of the few (five) gentlemen who followed the remains of that wretched monarch to their last resting-place in the Church of St. Lazare.

When attached to the Court of Henry III., Brantome, residing in the Rue de Grenelle, was a witness of the quarrel between his relative Bussy and M. de St. Val,² which singularly enough terminated itself without bloodshed in spite of the readiness of both parties to furnish our author with another "belle histoire"; and when Bussy seemed in danger of his life, he formed one of the escort who accompanied him out of Paris into the less dangerous suburb of Petit St. Antoine.

In 1576 he accompanied the Queen mother on the journey undertaken by her in order to bring back the Duke of Anjou.

After this date he does not appear to have been mixed up in any affair of importance, and after the death of the much-abused Queen Catherine in 1583 he appeared little at Court, having, it would seem, damaged his position by an injudicious advocacy of the claims

¹ François de la Noue, dit "Bras de Fer" (1531-1592), a famous captain and author of valuable memoirs entitled *Discours politiques et militaires*.

² Of this extraordinary affair Brantome gives a detailed account in his sketch of Bussy (*Hommes Ill. et Gr. Cap. Français*, Disc. 85).



EARLY MUSKETRY.

From Pfintzing's *Romance of Tewrdancks* (1517), ed. 1589.

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of his friend Marguerite de Valois, which he supported in defiance of the Salic law.

Late in life, as we learn from the opening pages of the *Rodomontades Espagnoles*, he was for a long period disabled by a fall from a white horse, of "ill-omened colour," which rolled upon him, causing a serious injury, at last relieved by a famous physician, M. Christophle. His curious anecdotes of Spanish bravado and artificial witticism were put together during his convalescence.

He died at a ripe old age in 1614.

Brantome was warmly attached to his sister-in-law the Vicomtesse de Bourdeille, who had appointed him one of her executors (1594-5) and expressed a warm obligation for his assistance in business affairs, but he seems to have lived on bad terms with most of his family, if not with most of the outside world. This must be attributed to a vain, fretful, and egotistic temper, which exhibits itself throughout his writings, and most notably in the immensely lengthy will, by which he provided that no relatives should be present at his funeral, but only twenty poor pensioners of his bounty "clad in coarse black cloth." He was buried at his château of Richemont, in a vault which he hoped would be ready in time—specially designed for his reception.

He left, moreover, an epitaph setting forth with verbose detail and jealous vanity all his claims, real and imaginary, to the regard and admiration of posterity. The will aforesaid gave also special directions for the printing and publication of the *Memoirs* "composed by his own wit and originality with much care and trouble," which are described, in their costly bindings, as preserved in the chests of the church. The first work printed was to be bound in velvet and presented to Queen Margaret de Valois.

The aforesaid literary works after being published

and republished in Elzevirian 12mo form during the seventeenth century, were collected into an "Edition definitive" of fifteen volumes, and printed at the Hague in 1740. They may be classified as follows:—

1. *Lives of French Celebrities and Military Men* (in three parts).

2. *Lives of Foreign Celebrities and Military Men.*

3. *Lives of Famous Women, French and Foreign.*

These biographical, if somewhat discursive, sketches (some two hundred in all) are supplemented by—

4. *Anecdotes (miscalled Lives) of "Gallant Ladies."*

5. *Anecdotes of Duelling.*

6. *Anecdotes of the Wit and Proxess of Spaniards* (entitled *Rodomontades et Juremens Espagnoles*)—see note on p. 15.

7. *An Essay on Celebrated Military Retreats* and a few translations and other opuscula.

The constant references in Brantome's works to the various historical events of his time will perhaps be best understood by reference to the following chronological table:—

EVENTS IN FRANCE.

GENERAL HISTORY.

- 1483 **Charles VIII.**
Conquest of Naples, 1495.
1498 **Louis XIII.** acc.
1515 **Francis I.**
1525. Battle of Pavia.
King Francis taken prisoner by Charles V.
1529. Peace of Cambray.
1547 **Henry II.** (killed in
Tourney, 1559).
Margaret de Valois (born
1553; died 1615).
Chastaigneraye Duel.

- 1453 Capture of Constantinople
by Turks.
1492-3 Discovery of New
World.
1517 Beginning of Reformation.
1519 *Charles V.* acc.
1521 Diet of Worms.
1521 Arquebus first in use.
1523 Capture of Rhodes by
Turks and of Belgrade
(Solyman the Magnificent). [bon].
1527 Sack of Rome (D. of Bour-

EVENTS IN FRANCE.

GENERAL HISTORY.

- 1559 **Francis II.** married Mary Queen of Scots 1561. Persecution of Protestants.
- 1562 **Charles IX.** Wars of Huguenots (1562-98). Siege of Rouen, 1562. Conspiracy of Amboise, 1568. Battle of Jarnac, 1569. Massacre of St. Barthol., 1572. Siege of Rochelle, 1573-4.
- 1574 **Henry III.** elected King of Poland (murdered at St. Cloud, 1589).
- 1589 States General of Blois (murder of Guises).
- 1589 **Henry Quatre** (assassinated, 1610). Battle of Ivry, 1590 (ruin of Catholic League). Siege of Paris. Reforms inaugurated by Sully (1560-1641). Wars of Religion ended by *Edict of Nantes*, 1598.
- 1610 **Regency of Mary de Medici** (1610-17). Sully removed from office.
- 1613 **Louis XIII.** "States General," 1614 (the last held before the Great Revolution of 1789). Beginning (under Rich-lieu) of the "Grand Age" of Absolute Mon-archy, "Grandeur," and Extravagance.
- 1529 Diet of Spires. "*Hugue-nots.*"
- 1534 Barbarossa seizes Tunis.
- 1535 Order of Jesuits instituted.
- 1545-63 Council of Trent.
- 1553 "Bloody" Mary. English persecution of Protest-ants.
- 1555 Pope Paul IV. elected.
- 1556 Philip II., King of Spain.
- 1558 Queen Elizabeth acc.
- 1559-60 Siege of Leith.
- 1561 Musket first employed in war.
- 1565-6 Siege of Malta by Turks.
- 1567 Alva sent to Netherlands.
- 1571 Battle of Lepanto. De-cline of Turkish power.
- 1574 Famous siege of Leyden raised by Prince of Orange.
- 1579 Foundation of United Netherlands ("Union of Utrecht").
- 1582 Introduction of "New Style" by Gregory XIII.
- 1584 William I. of Orange murdered.
- 1587 Execution of Mary Queen of Scots.
- 1588 *Spanish Armada.*

It will be obvious from the brief outline we have given of our author's life, that if his contributions to history were lacking in interest this could not be from any lack of original material. In fact, there is hardly any important personality, male or female, of the sixteenth century—an age so rich in striking personalities—of whom he does not tell us something we are interested to know.

Still, Brantome's biographies, however remarkable for the familiar actuality of their style, are part of the common material of history. The *Duelling Stories*, on the other hand, with their profusion of singular and entertaining detail, original and collected, present such a picture of the ethical standards and civilisation of the time—at least in that Philistine military atmosphere which pervaded so much of European life—as we can find nowhere else.

Brantome, whether he is discussing fair ladies or gallant captains, single combats in the lists or military tactics in the field, writes throughout as one who knows what he is talking about and has been as often as not "a part of what he saw." It is true that he has his prejudices—in favour of the Guise family, Catherine de Medicis and the "Reine Margot." It is equally true that his interests and appreciations are limited, that he is concerned almost exclusively with the more material and elementary side of life, that as a courtier and military adventurer, he finds social and domestic morals, military prowess and skill, more to his taste than "politics." In a Memoir, however, which is almost exclusively concerned with deeds of violence and chicanery, these defects are less noticeable. On the other hand, our impression of the spontaneity of the production is irresistible. A large proportion of the actors in his vivid little "historiettes" were personally known to him. Many of the occasions referred to—

"When we were on our way to the relief of Malta" . . . "The first time I was in Italy" . . . "Once when I was passing through Milan" . . . "In the time of the Duc de Guise—the one last murdered" . . . "At the siege of"—such and such a place . . . "In the King's apartments at the Louvre"—illustrate the extent and variety of the narrator's experiences.

In other cases we are repeatedly told he heard what had happened, shortly after the event from the parties immediately concerned or others who were present. The earlier anecdotes are mostly taken, as he tells us, from well-known Chronicles, Froissart, Paolo Giovio, Du Bellay, Monstrelet, the *Romance* of Bayart, *The History of Naples*, or *The Chronicles of Savoy*, occasionally from accounts (written or printed) which he does not specify, and once at least from a rare book in his own possession. Minor details again are often given (distinctively) as mere matters of common talk or tradition worth mentioning, though not to be vouched for.

Who that is interested in this active period would not wish to talk to so well-equipped a *raconteur*, even though he be above and before all things a "gossip"?

A man of many words and little thought—often trivial and occasionally a little tiresome (especially when he gets upon that eternal "family affair," the Chastaigneraye duel—he seems to give us every passing impression, every casual idea of the time, shaken, as it were, through the sieve of his mildly inquisitive mind.

What attracted him to the subject of duelling was, he tells us at starting, a mere unprejudiced curiosity as to the proper etiquette, the rights and wrongs of the practices of his day—chivalrous or the reverse.

Ought one to be generous to an opponent—and run the risk of being murdered by him some other day, or take every advantage one can and be thankful? If

you were so fortunate as to kill your opponent, ought you to burn his body or let the family bury it? Could a "second" make a valid surrender for his principal? and if he did, was this creditable to the latter? Ought Charles V. to have fought Francis I.? and if not, why not? Is this or that ceremony or artifice to be seriously encouraged or utterly condemned?

"On all these points, and points obscure as these," illustrated from past history and recent experience, Brantome provides an inexhaustible store of precedents, wise saws, and modern instances.

And if they all lead us to no very definite conclusion except a sense of relief that we do not live under the "ancient laws of the duel," it is, after all, little matter, for no one, not even the most "renowned experts," would seem to have attained to a very precise certainty.

But while the narrator is sincerely bent on sweeping together from all sources and preserving for our edification anything that contains the materials of a "*belle histoire*," nothing can be more remarkable than his absolute detachment from the problems of morals, not to say criminology, which they so constantly suggest.

Where not purely sensational, as has been said, his interest in life and the barbarism and bloodshed which made up so much of it is singularly academic. The quasi-religious reflections which he has ready for all suitable occasions are mainly ornamental, to remind us that all this "*Sacrement de l'assassinat*," as his French editor calls it, belongs to a really pious and Christian age, or what would be so, but for those Huguenot abominations. He has the orthodox eulogies for heroes of the old-fashioned School of Bayard, but he recounts with unruffled cheerfulness anecdote after anecdote of artful and cold-blooded assassination thinly disguised by a few artificial formalities.

To the reader who looks back perchance upon the days of Henri Quatre as "spacious times" of chivalry and heroism, nothing will appear more remarkable than the unromantic nature of these contests. The spirit of chivalry, of the piety animating men like Bayard, had practically died out of society before the death of Brantome.

In his days there were indeed plenty of cavaliers *sans peur*—for the successive Civil Wars had barbarised society and made life cheap—but very few, it would seem, *sans reproche*. Brantome himself embodies the tone and taste of a corrupted generation. His stories are for ever touching the fringe of the moral history of the French Court in his time, a curtain which could not be lifted in any book intended for popular perusal.

It is true the pure old-world joy of fighting for its own sake, apart from family feuds or a personal interest in assassination, was by no means extinct. There were people who came into the lists to fight, and would "take on" two at a time, or three in succession, rather than leave any one dissatisfied. But the whole religious sanction of the "wager by battle" had lost its primitive simplicity, and was no longer what mediæval fancy had painted it.

The workings of Providence, those "Secrets de Dieu" so obscurely revealed in the results of these contests, were on the whole little more intelligible than the operations of electricity to some eighteenth-century scientist. Still, Brantome himself thought it was absurd to throw away chances, especially if your opponent, as in one scandalous case, "was always hanging about the Churches"; it was wiser to conciliate every potential force you knew of, to "hedge," if you were not prepared, like Count Robert in the Chronicle, to do without the Divine

aid. Even if you were not so serenely confident in your own unaided prowess, a "good cause" might very often come in as useful as an extra sharp dagger, though it was best to make sure of having the latter—especially if your opponent had forgotten to bring his.

The question—even *the* question of chivalry, the defence of the honour of fair ladies—resolved itself into a few cut-and-dried formulæ. The sword, as in competent hands it could give authenticity to documents which, judged by scriptural tests, appeared to be barefaced forgeries, was also conclusive evidence of moral character, otherwise presumed on the slightest grounds to be bad.

Every one, we understand, was bound to defend the character of the fair sex whatever he might happen to think or know, for after all, "*however bad she may be,*" a woman does like to be thought honest and respectable.

Manners, in fact, and appearances were practically everything to the artificial standards of an exclusive if corrupt aristocracy; and there is nothing better in all Brantome's book than his sketches of one or two "persons of quality" like Bussy and the Duc de Guise ("*the one recently murdered*"), taciturn, contemptuous, and *haut-en-main*, past-masters of the grand manner, *par excellence*, for putting down common people, prototypes of all the Strathmores and Guy Livingstones known to romantic fiction, who could yet unbend now and then so far as to throw a massive "silver candlestick" at your head, or even run you through the brisket.

As to male honour, it is enough to study the career of the author's particular friend Baron Vitaux, and the long tale of treacherous murders connected with the name of this eminently successful duellist.

In the mere matter of bloodshed, the number, so to speak, of "scalps" taken, probably neither Vitaux nor any other of Brantome's duellists come anywhere near the record of "Caravajal the Cruel," a gentleman mentioned in the *Rodomontades Espagnoles*, who was said to have killed a hundred men with his own hands in one battle! How many modern warriors have done this? "It was said," says Brantome, "that he (M. Vitaux) killed his men unfairly"—in the *champ clos*, that is. Of course, when you dogged a man round street corners or into his bedroom, you had to get him "in ogni modo," as one would kill a rat. But when such a man as his friend could be represented as one of the shining lights of European chivalry and the "paragon" of France, it is not surprising to learn that a few douce and timid gentlemen here and there took refuge from such a society where alone it could be found—in the bosom of Mother Church.

Perhaps it is scarcely matter of regret that our author, who is apt to be a little prosy even on non-technical matters, apparently possessed no special knowledge of the science of fencing such as it was in his day.

Though he tells us a good many miscellaneous details about arms and armour,¹ and mentions the names of Tappe, Paternostrier, Jacques Ferron, and other fencing masters of the day, he says very little of the special skill by which the different victories he describes were attained. His vocabulary, indeed, is noticeably limited, and he rarely uses a technical term.

¹ Some of his best military anecdotes specially concerning the Spanish soldiery—then perhaps at the height of their fame—the introduction (by them) of the firelock, &c., are contained in the *Rodomontades Espagnoles* and the *Belles Retraites*, commonly appended to the *Duels*.

Perhaps there was scarcely time to dwell upon that branch of the subject; but we suspect it interested him comparatively little.

Here, at any rate, are no glowing and lifelike pictures of sword-play such as adorn the immortal *Trois Mousquetaires*—a romance, by the way, belonging to a period near half a century later, when the art had been greatly elaborated.

It was recognised that a blade in the hands of a trained fencer could be “sword and shield,” though it was better to wear defensive armour. But of particular parries, “coups,” and “bottes” we hear nothing, merely general assurances of the peculiar strength or unrivalled courage of victorious or unsuccessful champions, assurances so incessantly repeated as rather to defeat their own object. Yet if there were not a good many masterly fencers about, one would like to know how it was, for example, that “Count Claudio” polished off so adroitly the *four* soldiers whom he would not allow to fight each other in a sheep-pen! But we must not anticipate our text, in what is intended as a mere introduction of the *Duelling Stories* and of their author.

A volume of this size concerned with scarcely any subject but violence, malignity, and cunning, dressed out with a thin veneer of chivalry and piety for which cant would be too grave a word, can hardly be read without rousing some serious feeling.

In style and spirit the most heartless and *blasé* of comedies, Brantome's book presents a tragic phase in the history of his country, what may be called the “passing of *Romance*,” the extinction—amid a weary and terrifying turmoil—of the old-fashioned, self-denying, and practical element in French life and politics. That had not altogether perished with the



HENRY IV.

Frontispiece to Preface :

Hist. de Henry le Grand. Paris, 1662.

[To face p. 16.

irreproachable Bayard ; it survived in many a patriot and thinker such as Pasquier, Henri Estienne, and Montaigne, to whom the sanguinary dissensions of fanatical zealots seemed but a national disease for which a good king and a great minister might find a cure.

Could they have done so ? "*C'est à sçavoir.*" But at least there was a certain homely vigour amid all the license of Brantome's age which is lost in the ornate age of absolute monarchy and rotten magnificence which set in so soon afterwards. It is enough to contrast the great Henry of Navarre, most homely and beloved of French sovereigns, desperate fighter, and practical administrator, with the heart of a lion and the morals of a spoilt child—to contrast Henry le Grand, we say, and that other "Grand Monarque" of a century later, when Royalty had become a vast artificial and noxious pageant, the finances a demoralised chaos far beyond control, while society was corrupted by privileged class selfishness and vicious centralisation. To many of us indeed, Sully and "Henry Quatre" are the last really romantic figures on the stage of French History.

Under them liberty might have grown, and common sense averted the invasion of despotic unreality and economic disorder. Such were the hopes cherished.

Was it already too late ? Had the iron of misery—such misery as Brantome clearly paints for us (and the satirical D'Aubigné even more clearly)—entered into the national soul ? Was it one of the inscrutable "Secrets de Dieu" that doomed France, at the close of this age, to choose and keep a wrong path—in politics, economy, and social ideals ? *C'est à sçavoir.*

Much had been done already. The *Satyre Menippée* (1593) had found an antidote to the poisonous drug of Spanish fanaticism. Henry with his "Oriflamme" and

his practical sense ¹ had crushed the Hydra-heads of the Catholic League, and with the help of the sagacious Sully was binding up the bleeding wounds of his country, when—the blow fell. To contemporaries it seemed a fatal and bewildering calamity, the serious consequences of which we must leave to be discussed, as Brantome is so fond of saying, by more learned authorities. Yet of all the assassinations, the deaths by cold steel which occupy this volume, none were more significant than that which extinguished the hopes of struggling and bankrupt France on May 14, 1610.

There, in the narrow Rue de la Ferronniere, while an unwieldy Royal coach—on its way to that confounded ceremony—stood blocked between a vintner's dray and a hay waggon, while one lacquey ran forward to curse the drayman, and another stopped behind to tie up his garter, was enacted the most deadly and sensational of all "single combats" ² of this blood-stained age, when a "monster from hell" in the form of Francois Ravaillac, mounted at his ease upon the wheel of the chariot, leant across the persons of several absent-minded courtiers, and delivered three deadly thrusts at the heart of "Henri Quatre."

So much, "*pour revenir a nos premieres erreurs*," for the Seigneur de Brantome and the historical crisis, the national suffering for which he exhibits such a sublimely frivolous indifference.

¹ Cf. the one genuine remark recorded of him at his famous battle—"Ne m'offusquez pas ; je veux paristrer" ("Get out of the light ; I want to be seen").—Fournier, *l'Esprit dans l'Histoire*.

² See p. 62*n*. For details of the scene, and of Ravaillac's subsequent execution, *l'Etoile Journal de Henri IV*. "There was no mother's son," says he, "among the populace, who did not get a bit of him to roast in a street corner."

It only remains to say a word on the form and genesis of the present volume, which may perhaps be best described as a "study in" Brantome's Memoir, illustrated by other contemporary records of the time.

In the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1901, I endeavoured to give a critical selection from the *Duelling Stories* in a form adapted to the general reader. The approval accorded by various kindly critics (including my publisher) to this essay has induced me to attempt a presentation of the whole work—in a somewhat similar form; combining an idiomatic translation with some elements of the introductory and critical review.

If there are few carefully-written histories of three hundred years antiquity which in a purely literal version make intelligible and agreeable reading, this is even more true of Brantome's extraordinary miscellany, which has, on literary grounds, no special claim to exact reproduction.

The author's language is so eminently conversational as irresistibly to invite comment, not to say revision. His text teems with unmeaning and ill-considered verbiage. The conventional laudatory epithets (expressive of bravery, honour, and the like) applied to almost every character—certainly every duellist—in the book would fill another volume by themselves. His reflective platitudes repeat themselves like recurring decimals. His grammar is of the domestic and postprandial order, and the nominatives (of his most animated sentences) have to be inferred often as not, from the story he is telling—literary idiosyncrasies which if clearly sketched here and there, need not be endlessly reproduced.

The translator has accordingly enlarged his responsibilities a little without fear of censure from any reader acquainted with the original. The anecdotes them-

selves, with every first-hand detail of life, action, and conversation I have been at pains to reproduce with all the actuality possible. Of the padding in which they are wrapped up some purely insignificant or tiresome matter has been omitted or abridged, and the repetitions, where inevitable, cut down to a minimum.

On these principles my endeavour has been to produce a readable and homogeneous volume, which does not, however, struggle after a style more serious or dignified than that of the author himself. The reader will, it is hoped, understand and distinguish both him and his "parrain" in the present literary venture. Nothing of more than verbal interest has been omitted or ignored. And all the literary characteristics of Brantome's writing, even at its worst and most diffuse, have been faithfully represented, in one place or another, with a sufficient citation of the original French to put the reader *en rapport* with the language and manner of the text.

Brantome's store of actual "Duelling Stories," plentiful at first, tails off during the latter part of his volume into rather long-winded gossip concerning the manners—we may add, the temper and the violence—of aristocratic military society of his time, vague second-hand reminiscences, anecdotes of abortive "affairs," and miscellaneous notes on the Civil Wars. Even here, however, the many curious details of a kind scarcely to be encountered elsewhere form a not unnatural appendage to one of the most singular records of the age.

For the notes bearing upon so many celebrities of the period I must confess my obligation to those of the learned Duchat included in his edition of Brantome's Works (eight volumes, 8vo, 1779) and to the sumptuous reprint of the *Discours sur les Duels*, prepared by M. Henri de Pené for the *Librairie des Bibliophiles*, Paris, 1887.

To furnish illustrations to the anecdotes I have examined a large number of the most famous works on fencing which belong to the period concerned. It is hoped that the selection of engravings from these contemporary sources will serve to actualise Brantome's detailed descriptions of the apparatus and scenery of the early duel.

For the reproduction of several fine specimens of sixteenth-century arms and armour (items specially referred to in the text) from the Burgess Collection I am indebted to the kindness and courtesy of the officials of the British Museum. The portraits of French kings are mostly borrowed from the gallery of celebrities of the time published by Niel—*Portraits des personages illustres du 16^e siècle* 1856.

G. H. POWELL.

6, KING'S BENCH WALK, TEMPLE,
September, 1903.



WARRIOR AND ARMS OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

From Grassi: *Art of Defence*, 1570.

Duelling Stories of the Sixteenth Century

BRANTOME'S attention had long since been drawn in numerous discussions among specialists to the question of courtesies as practised in duels—ought they to be allowed, or ought the rigour of the law to prevail?

It was the Danes and the Lombards who first brought the combat "*à outrance*" into such vogue, though the fashion had been only too faithfully and rigorously handed down among Christians, especially in the time of Charlemagne, who himself made laws which were much in use among the French and Italians.

There was no question of courtesy in those days. A man had to enter the lists resolved to conquer or die: seeing that by those aforesaid Danish and Lombard laws the conqueror did just what he pleased with his unsuccessful opponent. Thus he had the right to drag him about the field, hang, burn, keep him prisoner, treat him worse than any slave. Such was the position of the conquered.

It was thought that this idea of dragging your enemy about the lists might have been borrowed from the example of a certain Homeric hero—Achilles to wit—who is recorded to have dragged the body of Hector

at the tail of his chariot three times round the field of battle in token of his triumphant and glorious victory.

Well, Brantome had heard tell of a brave and valiant lord some fifty years before who had entered the lists in the fullest determination to treat his enemy in this very manner, an enemy too who was by no means his equal in strength and prowess ; but the Almighty took the side of the weaker and would not give victory to the strong man (who could not have it but of Him). The design in consequence never "came off" ("ne prit feu"). It was at the time when Henry II. came to the throne that there was a duel fought at Sedan between the Baron des Guerres (or d'Aguerres) and the Lord de Fendilles about a quarrel they had the very day His Majesty entered Paris. The subject was one unsuited for any other form of discussion : it is enough to say that the insult was deadly. Fendilles was a fine young fellow, in the train of the Vidame de Chartres, who stood for the very flower of Chivalry at the Court in those days. The Baron, on the other hand, had been page to King Francis and born in Lorraine, though his forbears were of Basque or Bernese origin. For, as M. de Montluc tells us,¹ King René of Sicily, Duke of Lorraine and Anjou, was mighty fond of Gascons and gentlemen from those parts, and gave employment to many of them, so that not a few married and settled there and left a goodly offspring.

Well, these two brave fellows, to settle their affair (seeing that apology or reconciliation was out of the question—the Baron's honour was too nearly touched for that), applied to King Henry to appoint them a place for combat. The king, however, mindful of the oath he had sworn after the affair of La Chastaigne-

¹ Montluc, Blaise de, "le Boucher Royaliste" (1502-1577), *Memoires*.

raye,¹ and the extreme distress felt at his death, flatly refused anything of the kind.

All these things, by the way, Brantome regarded as predestined by Fate. Apart from that, the King ought certainly to have prevented this contest. He did not, however, and we are to note that the King himself, like the dear friend whose rights he should have asserted (for Chastaigneraye was, in a way, fighting in defence of the Royal honour), both perished in what might be called single combat.²

However, to return to our two duellists, on the King's refusal they applied to M. de Bouillon to let them fight at Sedan, a request which he, as absolute sovereign in his own territory, granted willingly enough; and on the appointed day they appeared punctually with all their relations and friends, seconds, supporters, and what not, according to all the laws, ceremonies, and usages required.

The point of the story, however, is that the young de Fendilles would not hear of entering the lists (ferocious young braggart that he was) till he had seen a fire lighted and *a gallows got ready* to hang and burn his enemy after the victory, of which he made so certain.

¹ This matter, as it recurs throughout Brantome's book like the refrain of a song, may as well be shortly explained to the reader at once. Brantome's uncle, La Chastaigneraye (a noted duellist and bully, it may be observed), was killed in 1547 by his friend and comrade-at-arms, Guy Chabot de Jarnac. The latter *hamstrung* his opponent with a stroke which became famous as the "*coup de Jarnac*." The technical details of the contest (which Brantome can never bring himself to describe in full) are to be collected from various passages in the present volume. It must not be confused with the sanguinary battle of Jarnac (1566) at which the Prince de Condé fell and the Huguenot party received a severe blow.

² An allusion to the assassination of Henry III. by Jacques Clement in 1589.

However, fortune failed him, as has been said, and he was far from being as victorious as he expected, though on the other hand he could not be said exactly to have been worsted.

Both parties wore armour, and for offensive weapons De Guerres had chosen a short, thick kind of sword called a "bastard" in the use of which he was very skilled, having had lessons from a certain priest who was a noted master of fence.

It is true that M. le Vidame, l'endilles' second, raised a question as to this particular weapon, alleging that it could not be included under the definition "weapons such as are used among cavaliers and gentlemen of honour." It was replied, however, that the Swiss, well-known as a warlike people, used no other sword but this kind. So, as M. de Chartres had abundant confidence in the courage of his young principal, the dispute went no further.

Thus when all proper formalities had been observed they entered the lists, and at the first assault Fendilles delivered such a thrust at the thigh of the Baron de Guerres as laid it completely open. The Baron, feeling that his strength was rapidly failing from loss of blood, bethought himself of using his skill as a wrestler. In this also it seems he had been specially instructed by a "little Breton priest," almoner of the Cardinal de Lenoncourt. So he closed with his antagonist and bore him to the ground; and there the two lay and struggled—both parties had discarded their weapons for the wrestle—the Baron uppermost, and using his hands and clenched fists for all he was worth, but feeling all the while that it was to little purpose, as he was losing blood so rapidly and getting weaker every moment.

At this crisis in the combat, however, a singular accident occurred in the fall of a scaffolding on which



A DUEL.

From St. Didier : *Traicté de l'Epee, seule, etc.*, 1573.



“PRISE” AND “CONTREPRISE.”

From the same.

[To face p. 26.

a great many spectators “ladies, young ladies, and gentlemen” were sitting to watch “this cruel pastime.”

Perhaps Brantome thought they were duly punished for their inhumanity. Anyhow, the confusion which followed was so great from the accident and the shrieks and cries of the sufferers that people did not know “*a quoy s’amuser*”—whether, that is, to see out the duel, or to go and rescue the ladies who were stifling and trampling one another to death!

However, some of the supporters of De Guerres had at last a happy and practical thought. They seized the occasion of all this disturbance and hullabaloo to call out to their embarrassed champion, “*Throw some gravel in his eyes and mouth.*”

The Baron, wounded as he was, had strength enough left to execute this simple manœuvre, and so reduced his haughty young antagonist to a shameful surrender—at least, *so the Baron’s supporters said*. It is to be noted, however, (1) that apart from the peculiar opportunity offered by the accident, they would never have dared to think of such a breach of all the law and etiquette of duelling, which rigorously forbade spectators to speak—nay, even to cough, sneeze, or make any kind of noise, or sign which could attract attention. Also (2) that the confusion and noise did not operate purely in favour of the one party. On the contrary, the supporters of the unfortunate Fendilles indignantly denied that he had surrendered or that they had ever heard any such words uttered, which was indeed likely enough. De Guerres was determined to inflict upon his opponent the full penalty which the latter had intended for *him*. The seconds of Fendilles vehemently asserted that he had no such right. So finally, after much angry disputation on the matter, M. de Bouillon, who was judge, taking counsel of other military authorities about him, decided that the affair

should go no further, as the main point was somewhat doubtful, and there really was a great deal to be said on both sides.

Brantome appears to console himself with the reflection that both parties fought very bravely, and the conquered man, in particular, distinguished himself afterwards in many a gallant service to his King and finally fell during the assault on Caunis, when that place was besieged by the Marshal de Brissac, being one of the first to mount the breach, and being killed at the very summit.¹

The story, we are told, serves to illustrate (but does it?) the ignominies that could be inflicted by the victor on the vanquished, because if there had not been something a little obscure about the case no one could doubt that the Baron would have burnt his opponent, as he had a perfect right to do. But perhaps this was not the wish of the Almighty, the quarrel being unjust.

Olivier de la Marche, in his lifetime noted as a gentle cavalier well skilled with sword and pen, major-domo to the Archduke Philip, Count of Flanders, tells us in his *Memoirs* of a combat that took place in his time at Valenciennes before the good Duke Philip, which was certainly amusing on account of the curious and absurd ceremonies observed, though, as to the result, that was serious enough, seeing that the conquered man was killed, *and hanged*.

¹ This would be in 1557. It seems more probable that Fendilles died before Béziers, in 1562 (*Béze, Hist. Eccles.*). An account of the above duel, which took place in 1549, was published at Sedan, 8vo, 1620. In this it is distinctly stated that Fendilles "surrendered" in plain Gascon, "lou te le rends de bon cœur," and was ignominiously ejected from the lists, while De Guerres was escorted home in triumph to the sound of trumpets.

It turned on the question of an ancient privilege accorded long ago by the Emperors and Counts of Hainault to the aforesaid city of Valenciennes, that whenever any one had killed another "in fair fight" (*de beau faict*),—that was the term used, and Brantome highly approved it—that is to say, man to man and with no trickery nor cheating—he could demand the freedom of the city, on being prepared to maintain *with shield and cudgel*, that he had killed his man properly, as has been said, and as a gentleman should. And that freedom was conferred on him, and no one could raise any claim against him on the ground of the first quarrel, unless they were prepared to assert and maintain it in the same way, according to the law of the city. So says M. Olivier.

Well, it chanced that one Mahiot had killed a relative of Jacotin Plouvier, and the said Mahiot was prosecuted for this before the courts of the city, Jacotin alleging that his said relative had been killed by treachery and not in fair fight at all. Accordingly a single combat was authorised by the townspeople, according to their right, not by the Duke Philip, sovereign though he was. There was a great crowd present, but never a word or sound durst they utter. The person who kept order had a rod and cried out "Ware the ban!" (*gare le ban*) so that everybody kept quiet for his life for fear of the law.

The lists were a round enclosure with a large entrance and two chairs, one at each end, covered with black (note that point) for the two combatants to sit upon while waiting. But, before they began, a missal was brought in on which both of them took the oath; that was a very ancient usage. Both were dressed alike in *boiled* leather sewn tightly around the person, body, legs, and arms,¹ with their heads

¹ Rabelais, bk. iv. *Ep. Limin.*

shaved, their feet bare, and the nails on hands and feet carefully pared. This was on account of the "hold" in wrestling. Brantome could not understand why no mention is made of the beard, a dangerous handle when it is long and thick as commonly worn in those days—a fashion beginning to revive in the writer's own time.

For defensive arms each bore a shield with the point projecting above (only nobles, we are to observe, were allowed to carry one with the point below). The offensive weapon was a stout cudgel of medlar wood, of which they make excellent balls for the game of "Pall Mall" at Naples.¹

Before joining the fray the combatants were provided with three things—sugar, cinders, and oil: sugar (the morsels were carefully weighed too!) to put in the mouth and suck, to help them get their breath; oil, of course, to make the body slippery and difficult to clutch, after the fashion of wrestlers in Turkey; and cinders (though we can't help thinking sand would have been better) to enable them to hold their shields and staves securely. All the three articles were tested in their presence—would you believe it?—as if they had been a couple of kings or princes.

Nevertheless, all these preparations led to very little, for Mahiot at the very first onset flung a handful of the aforesaid gravel in the face of Jacotin, at the same moment dealing him a sturdy blow on the headpiece which brought blood. Jacotin, however (who perhaps

¹ *Pall Mall*, *Pale-maille* or *parmaille*, a game wherein a round ball is struck with a mallet through a high arch of iron (Cotgrave, cited in Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*), is the ancestor of the modern croquet. A pastime akin to golf, it was popular in the sixteenth century, and at a later date gave its name to the walk in St. James's Park, where Charles II. and his courtiers used to play.

had the wit to shut his eyes) was not so easily disposed of, and presently *gouged out those of his opponent!*—jumping upon him as he (Mahiot) lay flat on the ground. He then (though it would scarcely seem necessary) dealt him a stunning blow, and kicked him out of the lists. The wretched maimed creature was thereupon solemnly condemned by the judges to be taken to the gibbet and hanged! And there was an end of that duel. The reader who wants to know more may consult the original authority.¹

We should expect to find more than one of Brantome's anecdotes concerned with the vindication of female honour. The true chivalry, needless to say, has to be illustrated from the past. One has to turn back to an ancient if veracious chronicle ² for example, to read how it was decreed by the Parliament of Paris that the Lord de Carrouges, in the time of Charles VI., should fight in single combat against a squire called De Gris, accused of having done an unbearable wrong to the seigneur's lady during his absence in the Holy Land. It is only too certain that crusades in an age when moral and social restraints were not all they should be, lent themselves to this kind of abuse. Yet it seems strange that the lady, who drove to the

¹ Olivier de La Marche (1426–1501) *Memoires*, i. ch. 33. A valuable description, giving, as Brantome truly says, every detail of the procedure.

² Froissart, *Chroniques*, sub anno 1386 (bk. iii. ch. 45, ed. Lyon, 1559–61). The story, told in his inimitable manner (very different to Brantome's), does not say that Carrouges went on a crusade, merely that he was beyond seas and had long wished to travel. The previous litigation, carried from an inferior court to the Parliament of Paris, occupied more than a year! Le Gris was killed on the spot, and Carrouges received 1,000 livres and a place at Court.

spectacle in a chariot was ordered by the King to dismount, and placed upon a scaffold draped in black "because she was guilty" (even Brantome seems to have thought this rather hard measure) till her innocence was proved. There the poor creature sat accordingly "waiting the mercy of God and the chance of war." Those who have not read this moving story in the original will be glad to learn that Carrouges vanquished the enemy, forced him to confess everything, and promptly had him hanged on the gallows, which was all ready, as usual; while the lady was "acquitted and covered with glory." The modern reader may be unable to follow these very sudden moral transformations; but at the time every one was satisfied, and the whole scene was represented on an old tapestry in the King's apartment at Blois, where the narrator had seen it one day when the story was being explained to His Majesty Charles IX., who was much interested in such things—as indeed who would not be?

The combatants, by the way, wore the usual defensive armour covering all the body, and carried *maces*, just like those used by the 100 gentlemen who are called "*Becs de Corbin*,"¹ besides the short, thick sword, a sort of large dagger, which hangs by your side.

A more modern example of this kind of combat is cited from the "tragical stories of Banduel,"² where we read how the Signor de Mendoza, after bravely

¹ So called from the shape of the axe which these officials carried, which resembled the beak of a falcon.

² *Matteo Bandello* (ob. 1561) *Novelle* III. 1. Bandello's stories, which of all Italian fiction had perhaps the greatest influence on English literature, first appeared in 1554. They are mostly of a very sanguinary nature, and contain the originals of "Much Ado about Nothing," "Romeo and Juliet," and Massinger's "Picture." The above is one of the longest in the book.

defending the honour of the Duchess of Savoy, did just the same with the Count de Pencallier, that is, made him undergo the very penalty he had prepared for the unfortunate Duchess, before entering the field. For in that case, too, the gibbet and the fire were all ready for their victim—but for a just cause and the good sword of Mendoza, who forced the Count to confess his villainy and then put him to the death he deserved.¹

Brantome thought this a very fine story. It is less true, perhaps, to say that there were “few like it,” though it is rather difficult to understand how persons like Count Pencallier ventured to go about slandering respectable women in this casual fashion, when a “champion,” with perhaps all the latent forces of Providence behind him, might spring up at any moment. At any rate we are immediately confronted with a more remarkable example, though, it is true, belonging to a much earlier date.

It was in the time of Louis the Stammerer (846–889)

¹ Browning, in his “Gismond,” has reproduced the whole atmosphere—gratuitous *médiance*, light-hearted outrage and all—of these early judicial proceedings.

“And e’en before the trumpet’s sound
Was finished, prone lay the false knight,
Prone as his lie, upon the ground.
Gismond flew at him, used no sleight
O’ the sword, but open-breasted drove,
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

Which done, he dragged him to my feet
And said ‘Here die, but end thy breath
In full confession, lest thou fleet
From my first, to God’s second death!
Say, hast thou lied?’ And, ‘I have lied
To God and her,’ he said, and died.”

that the spouse of a certain Ingelgerius, Count of Gastinois, awoke one morning (like the youthful bride of Attila) to find her husband dead by her side. In great distress she summoned all the household, gentlemen, cavaliers, ladies, young and old, to see this piteous spectacle. But there was one among them, Gontran, a certain relative of the Count's who did not stop at the expression of surprise or sympathy. He openly accused the Countess of complicity in the death of her husband, indeed of having the worst of motives for such a crime. The King heard of this, and summoned both Gontran and the lady to his presence, for he much loved the deceased Count. The arguments on both sides having been heard, the case resolved itself into one of circumstantial evidence. Gontran accordingly challenged the lady or any one who would fight for her to disprove his accusation. She made a solemn oath that it was false. But not content with that, her accuser offered to maintain his charge against any champion who would come forward, and to prove in person (*par son corps*) that *it was so*.

This, the reader will understand, was in the eyes of the tribunal the next thing to ocular demonstration of the fact.

Well, the matter was long and carefully debated and discussed, the final conclusion being that, as the accused had made this offer, there was no alternative, by the custom of the realm of France, but for the Countess to find some champion who would accept it in her defence. At this sentence, we read, the lady was "greatly astonished." Possibly she was so far in advance of her generation as to suppose that innocence might be presumed till guilt was proved. Mediæval justice, however, knew better than that, and few can say it was always or altogether wrong. But, accom-

modating herself to circumstances, the unhappy woman went round to all her male relatives one after the other, piteously supplicating for their help, but in vain. They were all extremely sorry, quite convinced of her innocence—*desolés*, in fact, to be unable to come forward, *but*—they could not face Gontran, a terrible “man of his hands.”

“Base and cowardly relatives they were,” says Brantome, perhaps a little harshly. If the claims of kinship are not easily measured now, what must they have been in those dark ages—to a timid man, let us say, with perhaps a wife and family?

But as it chanced there was present amongst the assembly a young Ingelgerius, a boy of sixteen, whom the Countess had held at the baptismal font and caused to be christened with her husband’s own name. And he, when he saw his godmother in such dire straits, came forward and flung himself at the King’s feet, begging to be allowed to do battle for her—(Ah! what a godchild was that! What baptismal virtue!)—and promptly flung down his gage to Gontran, who received and picked it up. That was the custom of the time, that the appellant threw down a glove for challenge and the respondent took it up. Sometimes each party went through both ceremonies, and it was called “wager of battle.” Just as in the case of Jean de Guistelles of Haynault, and Pierre de Bournezel who picked up his glove, in the presence of Charles V. But that is another story.

The King in this case did everything he could to dissuade the youth from his enterprise, expostulating with him in these very words: “My boy, youth and rashness sometimes bring upon him in whom they lodge a heavier burden than he can carry, and he falls beneath it. So be well advised that you are a little too young to fight such a warrior as Gontran. Think

better of it, good youth, than to make your first essay at arms on a field of mortal combat."

But in spite of this fair remonstrance the intrepid young Count persisted in his resolve —though all the Court thought it great pity that so young a child should be given up to butchery and execution.

But the Countess, on her part, we are told, was glad enough. She hailed him with passionate gratitude, protesting the strength of her innocence and that he might well fight boldly in such a true cause.

The contest was accordingly appointed for the next morning at ten.

The Count, after a greeting and an adieu to his godmother, attended Mass, recommended his soul to God with a due bequest of alms and offerings, and, adorned with the victorious sign of the cross, mounted his horse and entered the lists, where he found his enemy all ready. The Countess was summoned. The usual oaths taken, on one side and the other ; and then —then—the combatants met in headlong charge.

Gontran indeed struck and pierced the young Count's shield through and through, but Ingelgerius, on the other hand, drove his lance right into the doughty Gontran's body, in spite of shield, armour, and all, bore him to earth, and springing from the saddle cut off his head and presented it to the King, who was as well pleased thereat "as if one had given him a city."

Then was the Countess promptly released, and made her humble thanks to the King (though one does not quite see what he had done to earn them !) ; and before all the assembly she embraced and kissed the dear boy her godson, to whom moreover were given of the King's bounty lands and estates in Gastinos and the lordships of Chasteau-Landon, for which he thenceforth did loyal homage. And the Countess, she lived



UNHORISING AN ADVERSARY.

Romance of Tewrdancks.

[To face p. 36.]

thereafter a pious life of fasting, prayer, and good works, till she died.¹

This story, you are to understand, illustrates the ancient usage in France as to wage of battle and the admission of knights who claimed to accuse or defend by their personal prowess, or to defend the life and honour of ladies. Brantome believed the practice originated with King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, who, among other chivalrous ordinances, undertook and solemnly vowed to defend ladies and fight for their lives, goods, and honour, as may be seen from abundant examples in the old chronicles and romances.

Thus when the brave Renaud de Montauban arrived in Scotland having been sent by Charlemagne to ask for succour, he delivered from death and the stake the beauteous Ginevra, who was at the point of despair, and made her base slanderer undergo the penalty he had intended for this fair creature.

As to mercy, there was no talk of that in such cases—you either died or surrendered—and surrender itself was worse than any death, because ten times as shameful. Besides that, the victor, as has been said, could deal with the vanquished just as he pleased—kill him, keep him prisoner, use him as a slave, sell, hire out, or pledge or give him away.

In another place² we had been told the story of

¹ So Brantome, in the text of his narrative, but in an appended note he cannot forbear making a suggestion which places him somewhat on a par with the deceased Gontran. Whatever we may think of him as a chronicler, truth compels us to admit that good taste could scarcely have been hammered into his head with a *baston de néflier*.

² *Vies des Dames illustres Françaises et Etrangères*.

Queen Jeanne of Naples, also recounted by Dr. Paris de Puteo in his interesting work on the subject of duels.¹ This beauteous Queen once on the occasion of a splendid and gorgeous entertainment, when she gave a ball in the great hall of her château of Gayette, did so honour the Lord Galeazzo of Mantua as to choose him for a partner in the dance.

When it was over that nobleman went on his bended knee to thank her, and scarcely knowing by what service to repay such a condescension vowed that he would ride knight-errant through the world, facing all dangers and deeds of high emprise against all other cavaliers he might encounter by the way, till he had conquered by his own prowess and brought to Her Majesty's feet two gallant knights as prisoners, and presented them to her to do what she pleased with.

Such a practice, however inconvenient to other travellers, was but one of the common courtesies of daily life as practised by the knight-errant of the good old times towards his lady, and any student of the early chronicles will know well enough how little use it would have been to suggest that the knight might have been much more usefully employed at home. Every age has its fashions, and in that referred to, far from condemning aimless violence or pugnacity, as such, men were seriously busied in inventing objects for it.

In the present case fortune was so extremely favourable to the Lord of Mantua that he went no further than Burgundy, Brittany, and England, and was only absent a year before securing the necessary brace of prisoners. Such, however, was the obliging and considerate nature of the Princess (the best and most beautiful of her time, we are reminded, and born of

¹ *Libri IX del Duello*, 8vo, Venice, 1540.

the noblest blood of France) that she declined to exercise any single one of the "cruel privileges" conferred upon her by law, and did not even care to make slaves of the two unfortunate gentlemen ; but having received them with the greatest kindness and hospitality, sent them away with handsome presents, equally delighted at her kindness, her beauty, and her generosity, which indeed was natural enough. For (as cannot be too strongly emphasized) *she might have done just what she pleased with them*. The story, as has been said, is more fully narrated elsewhere.¹

So there can be no real doubt that the aforesaid Dr. Paris was quite right to praise the conduct of the said Queen Jeanne of Naples, and to *censure* (if the reader will excuse the abrupt transition) that of the Canons of St. Peter at Rome, to which indeed too strong language can hardly be applied. For once when a certain knight brought *them* a prisoner, as he had vowed and promised in a fit of penitence, they showed the wretched victim no courtesy or generosity at all. On the contrary, they kept him there for ever so long shut up in the church—one presumes in the capacity of verger or attendant—and if ever he was allowed to look out at the door that was the utmost liberty allowed the poor wretch—conduct which certainly compares unfavourably with that of the beautiful and generous Queen.

The reader must surely understand by this time that according to the old-fashioned and orthodox laws—Lombard and other—nothing could be much more degraded than the condition of the conquered man. Thus every incentive was given to the development of

¹ In Brantome's life of the Queen.

courage and skill in warfare, which was, after all (certainly in Froissart's time) the real business of life.

Still, by the close of the sixteenth century, some real progress had been made—even in the combat *à outrance*—towards softening these rigours; and quite a number of conquerors had the moderation not to insist on their full rights.

There was a fine combat at the siege of Florence (1530) supervised by that great captain the Prince of Orange. The story is told by Paolo Giovio¹ but not so well as Brantome had read in some Spanish Chronicle, and heard it told at Florence.

The whole campaign, as every one knows, being more an affair of party faction than serious war, two young gentlemen of the besieged party inside the city agreed, as you might expect in such a case, to fight a couple of the besieging party. Either inspired by some particular animosity or for the mere fun of the thing, they sent a challenge to the camp of the Prince of Orange and offered to fight any two of their fellow-citizens in his army. They were promptly taken at their word by two other brave young Florentines on the Prince's side, and the morrow was duly appointed for the combat and all the correct securities and formalities arranged.

Accordingly, after all the usual preliminary ceremonies, the quartet of combatants met in the lists which were marked out by a stout cord held by the Lanzknechts, whose spears hedged round the enclosure. They wore no defensive armour at all, but fought just in their clothes, with particularly sharp

¹ Paolo Giovio, Bishop of Nocera (1483–1552), author of a famous History of his own time, Biographies of the Visconti, and other works (*Hist. sui temp. Lib. xxviii.*).

swords ;¹ and it so chanced that the fortune of war was equally favourable to both sides, one of each party being defeated, and one victorious. There was nothing to complain of in the valour of any of the combatants, who all comported themselves with absolute propriety. But one of the besieged party being desperately wounded, and weakened from loss of blood, when called upon to "surrender," could not quite bring himself to utter the hateful formula, and so determined only to answer, "I surrender to His Highness." "There's no Highness here but me, I would have you know," was the prompt reply of the enemy, "so surrender yourself to me, and make no mistake."

And at this the other, falling to the ground, made sign that he surrendered—absolutely—not for want of courage but through the fortune of war. However, the enemy behaved quite respectably, and they parted, with equal honours, as has been said, on both sides.

That reminds one of the brave answer made by the two cousins to Scipio Africanus in Spain, who, being in dispute about a certain lordship which each claimed to belong to him, decided to settle the matter by force of arms.

The great Roman general with his usual tact (*tout courtois et bon qu'il estoit*) suggested that it was a pity for such near relatives to fight about a matter which might be better settled by arbitrators, or in a court of law. "No, no," replied the fond relatives, who perhaps knew as much as Scipio of the local administration of justice. "In such a matter we

¹ *Espadas muy afiladas y agudas.*

recognise no judge but the God Mars, and our own good swords."

The combat of the Florentines was so famous that Brantome thinks it right to give us the names of both parties alike, as each deserved equal celebrity. On the besieged side fought Dante Castellano, and against him of those of the besiegers Bertinello Ballandino, who fought on one side of the lists; on the other side, the comrade of Dante, Ludovico Martelli, was opposed to Giovanni Bombino. In the end Dante conquered Bertinello, and without taking any extreme measures on his person simply left him there, and—as it was not allowed him by the regulations (a point to be noted) to go and help his comrade—went and sat down in a comfortable position where he could see the fight and rest himself. Meanwhile the Prince, by the kind permission of the said Dante, had the young Bertinello carried out of the lists and his wounds attended to. Ludovico Martelli fought against Bombino and reduced him to surrender in the fashion described. Bombino, of course, having uttered the answer specified, was the conquered man, but his opponent treated him generously, and not according to the letter of the Lombard laws. Altogether this was really a very fine contest, the details of which would repay careful study.

Once upon a time, when M. de Nemours, Gaston de Foix, the King's lieutenant in Italy, was at Ferrara, there came two gallant Spanish captains, who had heard so much of the renown, chivalry, and courtesy of this brave prince that, having a quarrel between them, they asked to be allowed to fight before him, to which he freely and courteously assented, taking it as a great compliment that they should prefer him to the Spanish princes, his mortal enemies, and the rulers of Italy, even for example, to their King Ferdinand.

On the appointed day the two combatants punctually appeared with all their friends, relations, seconds, and supporters, and went through all the proper formalities. It happened, too, that the Duchess of Ferrara¹ was anxious to be present, one of the most beautiful and accomplished princesses of Christendom in that day, whether for beauty of body or mind, and skilled in many languages. So M. de Nemours, who was greatly moved by her charms, wore her colours of grey and black, as the story tells, and a favour which, by the way, he had on his person at the battle of Ravenna. The combat, then, having been begun and carried out with all due bravery, one of the combatants was so severely wounded, and lost so much blood, that he was on the point of giving way, even of falling; the enemy pressed hard upon him with his sword at his throat. On which Madame the Duchess, whose kindness and courtesy were quite equal to her beauty and virtue, was so touched with pity that, clasping her hands, she appealed to M. de Nemours to put an end to the combat, so that the victor should not pursue his victory even to his death. But Nemours, *espris* as he was, was firm on this point. He would be her servant in every other way; there was nothing in the world he would not do to oblige, but in this matter he had no power. It was impossible for him to run counter to the laws of the duel. He could not honourably "ask an unreasonable favour of the conqueror, or deprive him of that for which he has risked his life."

How the fair and virtuous Lucretia took this answer is not recorded; but the dilemma was solved by a

¹ Lucrezia Borgia, the celebrated daughter of Pope Alexander VI. She was successively the wife of Sforza of Pesaro (1493), Talforso of Aragon (1498), and of Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (1501).

comparatively civilized compromise. The second came forward and said, "Signor Azevedo (for this was the name of the victorious combatant, the other was the Captain Sainte-Croix) I know my friend well enough, and that he would rather die than surrender; but as I see he cannot possibly do more, *I'll surrender for him.*" (Sensation.) Thus Azevedo remained the victor, and rendered thanks to God for it, and was escorted from the lists with pomp and congratulations and rejoicing, while Ste. Croix was quickly attended to, and his wound stanchd. There, it might be thought, was an end of the matter, but—his friends carried him off the field *with his arms*, thus raising another curious point of etiquette. Azevedo subsequently sent for these trophies of his victory—which he had, in fact, forgotten to demand at the moment of the surrender; and on their refusal, made a formal complaint. This being brought to the ears of M. de Nemours and the Duke of Ferrara, they ordered M. de Bayard¹ to send to Sainte-Croix and tell him the arms must be given up—or else M. de Nemours would have him brought into the lists again, *his wound unsewn*, and himself put back into exactly the same position in which he had been when his second surrendered for him. On which Ste. Croix, realising that the law was against him, and also that he could not help himself, handed the arms to M. de Bayard, who gave them up to the conqueror, as of course was right. Still there were punctilious people who raised considerable dispute about that. For example, it might be said that if, either through ignorance, forgetfulness, or any reason, you left your enemy's

¹ Pierre Terrail, Seigneur de Bayard (1475-1524) known as the *Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, whose biography by the anonymous "Loyal Serviteur," is one of the most famous of early French chronicles.

arms on the field, you had no right to send and demand them afterwards. This was a matter, like so many others, which only experts could decide. Brantome assures us he could have written a long essay on the subject full of arguments, which we cannot doubt, though his arguments seldom lead to any kind of conviction.

The further details of the fight are more interesting. It seems that Captain Ste. Croix received such a wound on the upper part of his thigh as laid bare the bone and caused such a flow of blood that in trying to advance and revenge the blow he fell. On seeing that, Azevedo observed, "Surrender, Ste. Croix, or I'll kill you." To which poor Ste. Croix answered never a word, but sat down grasping his sword and resolved to die first. Then Azevedo said to him, "Get up; I I can't strike you like that." Besides, it looked dangerous, the story says, with a man so desperate and so courageous. Then he got up and succeeded in walking two steps and fell again, this time with his face to the earth, and Azevedo had in fact raised his sword once to cut off the poor man's head, as he might easily have done had he wished, but drew it back again. Still nothing would induce Ste. Croix to surrender, and it was at that moment the Duchess tried to intervene on his behalf, for he was at the last gasp, and had he remained so any longer must have died from loss of blood.

We are to admire the pleasing device (*gentille invention*) of the second surrendering for "his principal," but on that point too there was a great deal to be said.

Could one consider such a surrender to be valid? (*porter coup*). If it were so, was it honourable to the principal concerned? These and a host of other questions could only be decided by really experienced duellists.

Azevedo, by the way, was much honoured by the French, conducted in triumph with trumpets and clarions to the quarters of M. de Nemours, and received with every hospitality, which, it seems, he repaid later with base ingratitude. So says the story; but without specifying details. It seems probable that he allied himself formally with the enemies of France and fought against M. de Nemours.

In this duel it is further to be observed that Azevedo was the assailant and his second Federigo de Bonzollo, of the house of Gonzaga. Not knowing what weapons he might have to fight with, he brought every kind you could think of for use as man-at-arms, on "jennet-back"¹ or on foot. Azevedo was in the lists when the Prior of Messina (the third priest we have heard of as mixed up with these decidedly "lay" proceedings) brought him two casquets,² two sharp rapiers, and two daggers, out of which he made his choice. Just then Ste. Croix appeared on the scene. Both combatants knelt down and said their prayers. They were then examined by the seconds to see if they had any arms or *charms* concealed under their clothes or on their persons, of which precaution more will be heard presently.

Then the lists were emptied, and no one was left there but the two combatants, the two seconds, and the good Captain Bayard, who was appointed master of the lists by M. de Nemours and the Duke of Ferrara,

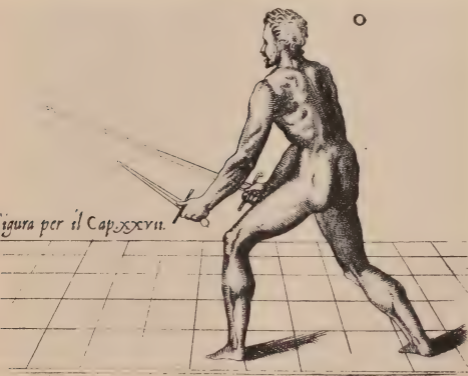
¹ On "jennet-back," *i.e.*, "with very short stirrups," as was the practice when riding the small Spanish hackney, or "jennet" (H. de Pene).

² Of the kind called a "secrete"—Italian *segreta*. The terms "secrete" and "rapier," Brantome tells us, he uses out of respect for antiquity, as terms of a bygone age.



"PRISE," WITH SWORD.

From Agrippa : *Scienza d'Arme*, 1:68.



SWORD AND DAGGER.

From the same.

[To face p. 46.]

partly to do him honour, partly because there was nobody in the world who understood these things so well. Then the herald began and made his usual proclamation that nobody should make a sound, spit, or cough, or do anything to disturb the combatants. Then they advanced one against the other, Azevedo carrying his dagger in one hand and his rapier in the other, while Sainte-Croix kept his dagger in its sheath and carried only his rapier. That the combat was to be mortal none could doubt, for they wore no kind of defensive armour. And so, after the exchange of one or two blows, came about what has been described.

That was the end of the combat—a fine and remarkable one, in which, as in that of the four Florentines, there are a variety of things to be observed. The first question, as already mentioned, is that of the surrender by the second for his principal and whether it can be regarded as valid, which certainly would not seem to be the case according to the ancient Lombard laws. At least that was the opinion of many gallant gentlemen and experts with whom our author had discussed the subject. Another point concerns the courtesies which these gentleman-combatants used to each other, not taking advantage of the letter of the law nor imposing the vile and ignominious conditions it allowed. Here there is no doubt Azevedo behaved with unusual generosity. It is true there are some people who, when they see a brave enemy driven to desperation, are a little afraid to come to close quarters, for there is hardly anything more dangerous than a man mortally wounded, who will sometimes make astonishing efforts and spring at you like a furious lion. In such cases a judicious and experienced combatant commonly contrives to keep a little way off if he can, only from fear of these last efforts of fury and bravery, just as the Seigneur de Jarnac did to Brantome's unfortunate

uncle, to whom we are thus brought back again. Jarnac, after he had hamstrung him, took precious care to come nowhere near, for he knew Chastaigneraye well enough to be one of the most valiant and determined men in the world—one whose desperate fury must be avoided. In fact, the other did make two alarming attempts to spring at him, and Jarnac, in fear of another, temporised and waited around till the King threw down his baton.

The third thing to be noticed is the language used by the Florentine to his antagonist, that there was no other prince in the lists but himself, and the remark of M. de Nemours to the Duchess that he had no power over the victorious party in a duel—all which is true enough according to the ancient laws; though for that matter there had been kings, princes, lords, sovereigns and their generals who, observing the abuses and atrocities that had come into use, when they allowed a duel, reserved to themselves right and authority to control it as they pleased. For instance, King Francis did this at the combat of Sarzay and Veniers, which was fought at Moulins on the return from the field of Piedmont. For, not wishing to see the thing come to extremes in this combat, he threw down his baton and ended it, as is well described in the *Memoirs of M. du Bellay*, which Brantome would not trouble to transcribe as it was written fully and fairly in that book.¹ He had heard

¹ *Memoires de Martin et Guillaume du Bellay*. Fol., Paris, 1571. But as the reader may not possess the book in question, we cannot leave him uninformed of this "very pretty quarrel," which took place in 1538. It involved four gentlemen of Berry, to wit, the Seigneur de la Tour Landry et de Chateau Roux, the Seigneur de Sarzay, the Seigneur de Veniers, and the Seigneur Gancourt, the original point of dispute being whether Sarzay had accused La Tour Landry of *having run away from the battle of Pavia, thirteen years before!* Sarzay having said that Gancourt had told him so, Gancourt,

FRANÇOIS 1^{er}
ROI DE FRANCE

AL



FRANCIS I., AFTER FRANÇOIS CLOUET.

From Niel: *Portraits des Personnages Illustres.*

[To face p. 48.]

it too from the late Constable himself¹ in Moulins, in

when summoned, "without denying or admitting the fact," only answered, "You told me that Veniers told you that," to which Sarzay assented. Gancourt then claimed that *he* had nothing to answer for, and was accordingly dismissed. Veniers, however, on being appealed to, denied the fact, and gave Sarzay the lie.

Accordingly, "to arrive at the truth of the matter," it was arranged they should meet in the lists. The special reason for approving this method was that as *none of the three accusing parties had been at the battle* (they had all "remained comfortably at home") it was rather difficult for them to know who had or had not run away! So De Sarzay and Veniers met and fought, wearing corslets with sleeves of mail, and gauntlets, with morions on their heads, and two sharp swords, one in each hand.

The fray, however, was conducted in a somewhat unskilled and amateurish fashion, which seemed to indicate that neither of the combatants (as one suspects must often have been the case) really "meant business."

They had discarded all their swords and closed in a wrestle; Veniers had already drawn a dagger and Sarzay was just feeling for his, when King Francis threw down his baton and prevented the affair going further.

After all La Tour Landry's character was fully cleared, as the King remembered (a fact which surely might have been mentioned before!) that he had seen him fighting bravely at the battle in question. That was presumably at a stage previous to the capture of His Majesty. A curious detail is that the two duellists being "replaced in their chairs" pending the Royal decision, Veniers, who was wounded in the ankle, apparently caught cold, and, having a fever upon him which was complicated by this exposure, died shortly afterwards (*Martin du Bellay*, bk. viii.).

¹ Anne, de Montmorency, Constable of France (1493-1567), one of the most famous military men of his time. He fought at Pavia, and was taken prisoner together with Francis I. He was made Constable in 1534, lost the battle of St. Quentin (1557), and fell fighting against the Huguenots at St. Denis. Of the office of "Constable," frequently mentioned in these pages, it may be said that the "Constable of France" was Commander-General of the Cavalry, subject to the "Grand Seneschal." On the abolition of that office in 1191 the Constable attained complete authority over all the army, including the Marshals of France, and had a special tribunal over which he presided. Military prowess, *not* high birth, was the first requisite for the office, of which the last holder was

the very place he was bound to remember, for it happened there and when he was appointed to his office.

The King, for that matter (Francis I.) threw down his baton in just the same manner at Fontainebleau in the case of that combat between Julian Romero¹ and the other Spaniard. That, however, was rather because they would neither of them fight seriously (*ne faisoient rien qui vaille*), but engaged in trifling with words and gestures and manœuvres—as far as one could make out from those that were there.

Henry II., of course, did the same in the Chastaigneraye duel. He threw down his baton, that is, but too late.

It is to be observed that this *throwing down of the baton*, which the King or presiding authority had in his hand or drew (at these crises), had such rigorous force of law in it that it was as much as his life was worth for either combatant to go on fighting or even to finish the stroke he was on the very point of delivering. Down came the judges, marshals, and keepers of the lists and separated the parties directly.

The Grand-master De Chaumont, the King's lieutenant at Milan, also gave a field to two Spaniards who requested it at Parma.

One was Peralto, who had been in the service of the

François de Boure de Les Digières. On his death in 1627 Richelieu abolished the office as incompatible with the principles of absolute monarchy. Its judicial powers remained vested in a tribunal of marshals up to the Revolution (Cheruel, *Dict des Institutions de France*).

¹ Julian Romero, a Spanish captain, of whom Brantome has much to tell us in the *Rodmontades Espagnoles*, after serving under Francis I., engaged himself to the Bishop of Liege, and was made prisoner by the French at the capture of Dinant, 1554. He had fought another duel, according to Duchon, at Fontainebleau, also against a fellow-countryman. He fell at Cremona in 1578.



74

ATTITUDE OF DUELLIST WAITING DECISION OF UMPIRE.



96

USE OF BATTLEAXE.

From Pistoflo : *Torneo*, 1626.

[To face p. 50.

King of France, and was afterwards killed by a blow from what they used to call a "falchion"¹ at La Fosse when Jehan Jacques was pursuing the army of the Pope.² The other man was a Captain Aldano. They fought on horse—that is, on "jennet-back"³ with rapier, "poniard" (as it was called then), and each of them—after the fashion of Joab when he went to attend to Absalom—"three darts in his hand." Peralto's second was a Spaniard, and Aldano's that nice Captain Molard.

It had snowed so heavily that they fought in the Piazza at Parma, where it had been cleared away, with no barrier but the heaps of snow. Both did very creditably, and De Chaumont, who was arbitrator, dismissed them with equal honours.

Thus we see how various kings, princes, and judges of the lists have assumed certain powers of control over the duel to mollify its rigours and prevent things coming to extremities. And they were really quite right. It is scarcely becoming for a Christian prince or lord to take a horrid delight in feasting his eyes on such inhuman barbarities, seeing that even the lion, the proudest and most cruel of all animals, when he has once overcome his enemy and brought him to the ground, leaves him there (!) and goes off quite contentedly. So Brantome. Modern naturalists may note that the habits of lions have since

¹ "*D'un coup de faucon* (je parle a l'antique)."

² Giovanni Giacomo Trivulzio defeated the troops of Pope Julius II. before Bologna in 1511. He became Commander-in-Chief of the French army, and took an important part in the victory of Marignan in 1515.

³ See note, p. 46.

deteriorated, while those of men have noticeably improved.

It is true there is always Bayard¹ to be remembered. One of his most famous feats of arms, by the way, was a combat he fought at Naples against a certain gallant Spanish Captain, Don Alonzo de Soto Mayor.

He had been a prisoner-at-war of Bayard's, and feeling dissatisfied with the board or lodging provided him, went about afterwards saying that he had not been treated at all properly or as a gentleman—a perfectly ridiculous complaint, because every one in the world knew that his host was the most considerate and courteous man alive.

After a time Bayard, becoming rather bored (*bien ennuyé*) with these proceedings of the Spaniard, sent him a challenge offering to meet him—man to man—in the lists, which Soto Mayor accepted with alacrity, undertaking to fight on horse, foot, or anyhow rather than withdraw the aspersions he had made.

Still his bravery was not devoid of a certain tactful prudence, as will be seen.

¹ Of this remarkable man, by the way, Brantome has left us a valuable portrait, derived, of course at second-hand (for he died three years before our author was born) from the companions in arms who survived and remembered him. The famous chronicle of his prowess by the anonymous "Loyal Serviteur" (now seemingly identified as one Jacques de Mailles), was well known to Brantome, who is perhaps one of the first to refer to it. Pierre Terrail (not Du Terrail) Seigneur de Bayard (1475-1524) fell, mortally wounded by a stone from an arquebus, on the retreat from Italy. His famous "last words," addressed to the Constable de Bourbon, when the latter came up with his victorious forces and found the hero dying alone under a tree, are recorded, not by the "Serviteur," but by Martin du Bellay. "No need to pity me," he said, "but rather that I should pity you, perjured traitor to your King and your country." This serious attitude to your "cause" and general conduct was not common amongst Brantome's contemporaries.

On the appointed day Bayard appeared mounted on a splendid charger and dressed all in white ("in token of his humility," the story said), escorted by my Lord de la Palisse and two hundred gentlemen, thinking that the combat would be on horseback. Don Alonzo, however—who, as the challenged party, had choice of arms—decided they should fight on foot.

He was not so good a horseman as Bayard (*so he said*). But the real reason was that the latter *had a touch of ague upon him that day*—a complaint that had troubled him for a year or two past—and the ingenious Soto Mayor thought to turn this weakness of the great man to his own advantage. He was considerably taken aback when the latter accepted at once with the utmost alacrity; but there was no getting out of it then. "The steed was saddled," as the saying is, though Bayard's seconds, by the way, wanted him to raise an objection on the ground of his illness, but the Chevalier would not hear of such a thing. In these little matters he was ever ready to oblige any one, and fight them just as they pleased.

The lists were marked out only with a few large stones put one upon another.

M. de Bayard took his place at one end, supported by a number of gallant captains, such as M. de la Palisse, d'Oroze, d'Imbecourt, de Fonterrailles, the Baron de Beard, and others, *who all joined in prayer* for their champion.

Don Alonzo stood at the other end with his friends, the Marquis de Lieide, D. Diego de Quignonnes, lieutenant of the great Gonzalo Hernando,¹ D. Pedro de Balde, and Francisco d'Altemira, and despatched to Bayard the arms selected, which were a spear and a

¹ Gonzalo Hernandez y Aquilar de Cordova, Viceroy of Naples, known as the "Great Captain" (1443-1515).

dagger, the combatants wearing gorgets and close helmets. Bayard again made no difficulty about the choice of arms. His second was a certain Belarbre, an old companion in arms, and his keeper of the lists M. de la Palisse, who was well skilled in such matters, while Francisco d'Altemira acted for the Spaniard.

Both combatants having entered the lists as aforesaid, each knelt down to pray; but Bayard laid himself down flat "to kiss the earth," and on rising made the sign of the Cross, and then advanced towards his enemy as confidently, so says the story, as if he had entered some palace hall to dance with fair ladies.

Don Alonzo, on his side, was no whit less at his ease, and marching straight up to his enemy, asked of him, "Sir Bayard, what would you of me?" To which Bayard replied, "To defend my honour," and without another word they met and dealt each other fierce thrusts. Alonzo was slightly wounded on the face and several blows were exchanged without any further result.

Bayard then noticing his adversary had a trick of delivering a blow *and then parrying*,¹ so that he could not be hurt, bethought him of a counter device, and when the Spaniard raised his arm to deliver his thrust the Chevalier raised his too but delayed the stroke, and when that of the enemy had missed him, made such a deadly thrust that the lance—for all the stoutness of the gorget—went four good inches into the man's throat, so that he could not get it out again. Don Alonzo, feeling that he was wounded to death, closed with his antagonist who wrestled with him, and in the struggle both fell to earth one on the other. But M. de Bayard, with great promptness (*diligent et*

¹ Or (?) "closing his visor." "Incontinent ses coups rués se couvrait le visage."

soudain), drew his dagger, and held it to the Spaniard's nostrils, crying, "Surrender, Senor Alonzo, or you are a dead man."

The observation, however, fell on deaf ears, for the man was dead already.

Then his second, de Quignonnes, came up and said, "Seigneur Bayard, he is dead. You have conquered." Which was in fact the case, for he never moved again. And no one was more distressed than the victor himself, who "would have given a hundred thousand crowns, if he had had them," to have conquered the man alive. Nevertheless, he knelt and thanked the Almighty for the mercy vouchsafed to him, and kissed the earth three times.

Then he dragged his enemy's body off the field, and said to Soto Mayor's second, "Is that enough?" and the latter answered sadly, "Enough and too much, my lord, for the honour of Spain."

"You know," said Bayard, "that I am entitled to do what I please with the body. Nevertheless, I give it up to you. Indeed—granted the safety of my honour—I would the event had been otherwise."

Then the Spaniards carried off their champion with tears and wailing, and the French escorted Bayard in triumph to the sound of trumpets right to the quarters of M. de la Palisse, where, before doing anything else, the pious Chevalier went to church and thanked the Lord. And after there was great festivity and much praise of Bayard, who was in truth esteemed a paragon of knights, not only in France, but through all the realm of Naples.

We need not assure the reader that there was a good deal to be said about *this* combat. Once entered upon the inexhaustible subject of Bayard and his feats of arms it was doubtless very difficult for any chronicler of the time to stop.

But the point is that it exactly illustrates, one way and the other, the complete etiquette of the thing as practised by the most chivalrous of gentlemen.

Note first that Bayard, for all his courtesy, did drag his enemy's body out of the lists—though to drag a brave man's body about like that by an arm or a leg, as if it were a log of wood or a dead dog, is ignominious treatment. There is no blinking this fact. He might have left it in the arena where it fell, and given it up to the seconds then and there. But the most perfect of gentle knights did not do this, and on principle.

Either he wished, Brantome thought, to publicly emphasize the fact of his victory, or he did not think his honour quite sufficiently revenged (without this formality), or he wished to show that he knew what were his rights and not to be blamed afterwards for not asserting them.

Beyond that there might be details to be discussed by high authorities, but, to come to the only other important point, of course Bayard was equally right in declining to avoid the combat on the plea of illness. That, after the day had been fixed and the engagement made, was out of the question. If a man were seriously ill, at death's door, that was another matter, though even then he would have to be examined *most carefully* by doctors and surgeons, and even other representatives of his opponents. But as to a touch of ague, the thing was absurd. Consequently, you see, Bayard declined altogether to raise the point.

Of course, if he had been engaged in a battle a day or two before and had been seriously wounded or had broken an arm, or if any other really serious accident which the devil himself could not provide against, had happened to him, then no one could have hinted that he was the least disgraced, or considered him the defeated party.

But for a little thing like this he could not possibly refuse to fight. And thus Soto Mayor was quite right in putting completely aside all the contentions of his (Bayard's) seconds and friends on the point. He wished, quite rightly, to take him at a disadvantage, and was not such a fool as to give away points to his enemy when he had choice of arms. Observing him to be weak and out of sorts, he declined, naturally enough, to let him have the advantage of being on horseback, but demanded to fight on foot, thinking this a strong point in his own favour, though it turned out otherwise.

That, however, does not affect the general principle that it is utter nonsense showing the slightest indulgence to your enemy while he has arms in his hand, or till you have him at your feet and at your mercy.

That was, no doubt, the opinion of "the best authorities," and not only of our author, who is thus brought back, of course, to that eternally insoluble enigma, the fate of "my poor uncle" La Chastaigneraye.

Once for all there can be no doubt that he ("*feu mon oncle*") made a great and fatal mistake in allowing the Seigneur de Jarnac to have the choice of arms when it belonged to *him* (La Chastaigneraye) by right. It was entirely of his own free-will, through his superabundant confidence in his own valour and bravery, and his contempt of his enemy, that he waived all these rights without a question.

And the ill-fortune of war so chanced that he lost his life by it, *but not his honour*, as M. de Montluc asserts in his book.¹ He, by the way, was a great friend of Chastaigneraye and (Brantome does not mind

¹ See note page p. 24 *supra*.

telling us this because he had heard it not only from his own friends, but from impartial authorities) had received much assistance from him in making known his merits and reputation at the Court, though he does say that Madame d'Étampes, Jarnac's sister-in-law, was against him, just because he was a friend and confidant of Chastaigneraye. However, apart from that, the latter did all that lay in his power to get Jarnac known and popular at Court where he himself was a paramount influence, even after the death of King Francis. For, after all, everything has its beginning, and new arrivals have to be helped on by the old wherever they go.

Apart from that—in the Court of Brantôme's time—a man might be as valiant as you pleased, as famous a warrior as Julius Caesar, still, *unless he was known at Court* (let the reader note this) or “had somebody to push him,” he had precious little chance. There were several stout warriors, to our personal knowledge, who had played the devil on the field of battle, but when they came to Court, unless they were supported and helped along by some courtier—pooh! they simply hadn't a chance.

It was no real injustice to M. de Montluc to say that “my poor uncle” had in fact, in his time, done him very considerable service.

For that matter courtiers of far less distinction had been known to make themselves useful to great men—military and other; so much that, by means of one single representation or request, in less than no time you might find them right at the top of the tree, and even Chevaliers of the Order.

“Those who have known our Courts in France will agree with me.”

“And so—and so, it was no reflection on the ‘Boucher Royaliste’ to say that for all his prowess and celebrity he wanted such help, just like other

people. Why, even when arrived at considerable advancement and position Brantome had known him as hungry and starving for Court favours as any one."

Hence it was, once more, simply amazing that he should, in the case of so good and influential a friend as he had found in Chastaigneraye (this reflection throws some light upon the historical value of memoirs), have ventured to let fall the word "dishonour." There could be no question of "dishonour" in such a case, unless a man surrendered like a coward to save his life; whereas Chastaigneraye, on the contrary, had kept crying, "Kill me, kill me." He even did more. In his indignation he pulled the bandages off his wounds and *tore them open again with his hands and nails*, in spite of all his friends and the surgeons could do to stop him.

The late M. de Guise (then M. d'Aumale) had a monument raised to our "late uncle" worthy of his valour, which gives a different account of the matter to Montluc's. It was in the ancient Roman style, and in Latin, here translated for brevity's sake:—

"To the pious Memory of

FRANÇOIS DE VIVONNE,

A valiant French Knight.

"Passer, that thou mayst not be the only one to go by without adding thy tears and prayerful regrets to the mourning of a King and all his Kingdom for François de Vivonne, one of the first Knights of one of the first families of France, know that favoured by the auspicious graces of Henry II., most august King of France, and yet by adverse fortune, he fought armed in single combat who unarmed never yielded to enemy. Ah! wretched fortune, miserable lot of poor humanity, unworthy

fickleness of things that he who is said to have been conquered, was fully armed, while without arms he was invincible. *Such was the force of craft and interference (empeschement des armes).*

"I adjure thee, then, by gods and mortals, passer-by and native of France, that for a trifling mishap in a combat thou cast not to thankless oblivion the memory of the many gallant deeds wrought on many an occasion in his lifetime by this noble and valiant knight for his King and the public weal, and that his good deeds be not forgotten for such a mischance. And that thou mayst not count this assurance false or fictitious, a great prince of France and Lorraine and noble knight, sorely grieved and distressed at such an unexpected fatality, has dedicated this tomb to the merits of the aforesaid brave and noble warrior of Poitou.

"Observe and farewell."

As to this "interference" with the legitimate course of things, and in explanation of the inscription, it must be explained that the hero referred to was one of the ablest and most skilful gentleman in France at all kinds of arms and fighting. In particular he was so good a wrestler that there was never a Breton competitor at that exercise whom he could not "throw," being as skilful as he was strong. He was of the middle height, well built, muscular and wiry.

The Seigneur de Jarnac knew all about this, seeing they had many a time tried each other's strength, being old companions in arms, though De Jarnac was two good inches taller, and ten years older than the other, who was only twenty-eight when he died. Jarnac then, fearing lest they should come to close quarters, provided against this by the ingenious invention of a certain Captain Caize, his instructor. This was a

peculiar sort of armguard made in one piece which did not bend at all, so that the left arm had to be held as stiff as a pole, which was a tremendous disadvantage for poor uncle Chastaigneraye, especially as he was a bit maimed in the right arm or at least only partly recovered from a serious wound he had received in the assault on Conys, in Piedmont, where he was one of the first men in, the time it was besieged by Admiral d'Arnebaut.

Thus both his arms were hampered and interfered with, you see; apropos of which fact M. d'Aumale, his second, and his other friends, made a great mistake to raise no dispute about this armguard, seeing it had been expressly provided on the cartels that the combat should be "with arms used among gentlemen," and this was a thing never practised or heard of among gentlemen, nor men-at-arms, captains, nor soldiers. So they ought to have refused it as a sort of false coin and have declined to put up with it for a moment.

But these gentlemen excused themselves and put it all upon the ardour and courage of their champion, who *would* fight, whatever the conditions, and insisted on accepting any arms offered him, had they been of red-hot iron. And in that, it cannot be too often repeated, they were wrong again, for in their capacity not only of seconds, but of guardians of his person, they had no right to allow him to run so absurd a risk, nor to let him act upon his own opinion when they should have forced him to listen to reason and act on their advice.

All this was inexcusable. And the most inexperienced tiro would have argued the point to the very death. As to their being disposed to accept it as an opinion held by the judges of the lists, why they ought to have contested it against them as obstinately as would be done against any judge in a law court when

he gives a decision against all justice, especially as these said judges were uncommonly glad to see "my poor uncle" disposed of.

Their motives are not to be disclosed to us. "*Envy is the cause of many things.*" *Verb. sat sap.*

Another thing is that the King himself, for whom La Chastaigneraye was in some measure fighting (that is too long a story to go into here), ought to have given judgment himself on such a point and set the judges right, especially for a man he always liked and protected. His Majesty's conduct also was wrong.

But there is One above, adds the pious nephew, who judges all. And it is a curious thing that *both* parties, Henry II. and poor uncle Chastaigneraye, *both* perished in what may be called a single combat.¹

It is pretty certain that but for this embarrassing choice of arms there would have been a very different combat, and presumably a very different result. Not satisfied even with that, Jarnac had also made a point of them having two daggers, one long one hanging by the side; the other short, and stuck into the boot; *all* as precautions against this dreaded wrestler.

"Well, Destiny had decided, so there's no use saying more about it"—as indeed the reader may be disposed to think, when—off goes the scandalised narrator at score again.

"As to discussing the details of the combat," he simply could not bear to tell us. It was too revolting.

Our imagination, however, may be feebly stirred by the fact that two months afterwards many people in France found the news—of this most unheard-of and unexpected disaster—absolutely incredible; so much

¹ Alluding to the murder of His Majesty in 1589 by Jacques Clement. Of this variety of rather one-sided "single combat" we hear a good deal in Brantome's time.



BREAKING A LANCE.

Romance of Teuwardancks.

[To face p. 62.]

so that two soldiers of Piedmont attained fame by fighting another duel among themselves upon the question whether the famous François de Vivonne were alive or dead, which, as each party was placed *hors de combat*, remained, by the duellistic law of evidence, undecided.

Brave soldiers those, and no mistake! But such ambiguity was sometimes noticeable about the decisions of the God Mars.

To come back again to that reflection of M. de Montluc, it seemed after all hardly credible he could really have uttered it, as Brantome had so often heard him speak so favourably of his late uncle (naturally enough, indeed), and praise him to the skies as one of the bravest men in the world. Being a generous man, he would hardly have descended to detract from an equal, even if Chastaigneraye had not absolutely chosen him for one of his four confidants, putting him on a level with M. d'Estampes, M. de Sansac, and the Signor Aurelio Fregoso, which was a good deal to do! Probably some idiot of a corrector of the press, or malign printer had inserted the phrase whom the author would hereby devote to the devil with all their impostures, lies, slanders, and printed stupidities.

It was quite true that often enough Montluc did say that poor uncle had fallen a victim to his own arrogance and the superabundant confidence he had in his own valour and his supreme contempt of his enemy; for they knew the measure of each other well, and had tried each other's strength often enough, as has been said before. That, in fact, was the gallant gentleman's undoing, for through that very over-confidence he neglected also to implore the assistance of God to help him. Even the very day of the combat he lightly passed by the church without attending Mass. Nay, he even invited for the very day all his

friends—ladies and gentlemen—to come and see the combat, using the phrase “I invite you—such and such a day—to my marriage.” *Ah! what a marriage was that!* While as to De Jarnac, he simply did nothing but hang about the churches, monasteries, and convents (*ne faisait autre chose que hanter les Églises*), getting people to pray for him, receiving the Holy Office every day, and especially the morning of the combat, after hearing Mass with the utmost reverence. Note, however, that there was very little of that *after* the duel. As the adage says, “Over the bridge one laughs at the Saint,”¹ *for he became the devoutest of Huguenots!*

Apropos of that M. de Sansac, a great captain of his time, when he used to get talking and telling you his ideas about war, and among other things of the Knights-Errent of the Round Table and of the valiant deeds of Tristan and Lancelot of the Lake—well, he would swear with horrid imprecations, as if it had been quite a real and important matter, that Tristan was really a hundred times as brave as Lancelot, simply because, when it came to fighting, Tristan had such confidence in his own valour that he never thought of trying to negotiate the Divine assistance, or any at all beyond that of his own good sword, whereas Lancelot was for ever entrusting his cause to Heaven and saying prayers, a pretty sure sign that he had precious little confidence in himself—in fact, was really afraid, and wanted the Almighty to do the fighting for him. Still this, we are to be assured, is really the safest course; and one should have no other confidence, and he (De Sansac) used to say just the same

¹ “Passato il ponte (*Pericolo*, ed. H. de P.) gabbato il Santo.”

and draw a similar moral in the case of that family affair to which we need not again advert at length. (The narrator is sorry, but you must excuse him, he could not get over it—*La cause me touche.*) *Pour retourner donc à nos premières errres*—Anglicè—to come back to where we started from (a constant and necessary process with Brantome) it will be seen that sometimes a victorious duellist might practise various courtesies; the reasons of which it would take too long to discuss, even if the author were less reluctant to intrude on the province of great military authorities aforesaid. He would merely wish in passing to mention the following fact:—

At the time when the great Duc de Guise¹ made his expedition into Italy and was in the kingdom of Naples there was a combat fought at Monte Rotondo, near Rome, between an Italian captain (engaged in the French service) and a Gascon called Prouillan.

The subject of their difference was a serious one, Prouillan having uttered an outrageous and unsavoury

¹ François, "le Balafré," son of Claude I., and one of the most famous men of his age. Born in 1519, and distinguished at an early age for his military prowess, he assisted at the capture of Montmedy (1542), the siege of Landrecy (1543), the defence of St. Dizier in the following year, and the siege of Boulogne (1545). Created Duc d'Aumale and Governor of the Dauphiné in 1547, covered himself with glory at the siege of Metz by the imperial troops (1552-53), conducted a less successful campaign in Italy (1557), and reached the height of his fame on the capture of Calais and Thionville (1558). Under the feeble reign of Francis II. the Guise family attained great power, and became the leaders of the Catholic party. Having crushed the conspiracy of Amboise (1560), and formed a triumvirate with the Constable Montmorency (see p. 49 n.) and Marshal St. André, the great Duke "only wanted the title of king" when he fell by the hand of an assassin at the siege of Orleans in 1563 (and see p. 142 n.).

reflection on Italians in the mass. It was one of those hasty generalisations which were apt to be unpleasantly specialised, all through the history of duelling, by some irritable individual within what we may call "the condemned area." Anyhow the Italian captain, a brave and fine fellow, "to my taste," of good figure and style, lithe, wiry, and dark-complexioned, naturally wished to clear the character of his countrymen, and so defied M. Prouillan with a formal cartel, to prove his words, man to man in single combat. The whole army was then in quarters at Monte Rotondo, so it was agreed they should fight there. M. de Pienne, as perfect a cavalier as ever was, who commanded a company of foot under M. de Nemours who was colonel of infantry, was Prouillan's second, and Paolo Giordano, our author thinks, the Italian's.

When they entered the lists, after all due ceremonies, it fell about that the latter inflicted an ugly wound on the Spaniard, and hamstrung him so that he fell to the earth unable to rise. Then, having made him withdraw his insulting words, but without going further, the Italian spared his life, and walked off the arena, taking the conquered man's arms, drove off in a coach with all his friends and supporters, and made a triumphal entry into Rome, with the arms carried in front of him as a trophy, and the mob crying out "Victory! victory! The honour of our country is saved."

M. le Mareschal de Biron, who was then with the army commanding two hundred light horse, will well remember the incident,¹ and that it caused a good deal of harmless mirth. Even Brantome, with all his

¹ Unfortunately the reader cannot verify this interesting reference. Armand de Gontaut, Baron de Biron, Mareschal of France, after a long military career, fell at the siege of Epernay, in 1592.

DANGER FROM THE "GALLERY" 67

respect for the laws of the duel, seems to have doubted if the honour of a whole community could really be held to be *reinstated* (note the presumption) by one single and private contest. Here again we read that the successful champion went to church to return thanks, and came out of the affair with great credit from all his compatriots for what he had done for them.

Prouillan, on the other hand, had his wounds dressed, but was afterwards observed to walk very lame. He had been in his time a brave soldier in the Gascon style, but after this episode seems to have lost his nerve. The Italian captain was much esteemed for the courtesy he had shown, though some people say (and here we are confronted with a new consideration) that he had his reasons, and was rather afraid: if he had taken the extreme advantage of his victory, he might have provoked the French soldiers who were there looking on to wreak vengeance on him in similar style. In fact, some of them did begin to give vent to their feelings at seeing their countryman conquered by an Italian; it was only by half a chance that there was no violence. So the gentleman was perhaps nothing more than extremely discreet in not pushing his victory to extremities, for, in fact, *if it had been in a place a little less secure for him*, one does not quite know what might have happened.

The only course was to be tactful and prudent. The Marshal de Vieilleville (Vieilleville, Chastaigneraye, and Bourdillon were known as three famous companions, you know, at the Court) used to say that if on that oft-discussed occasion, De Jarnac had not made a moderate use of his victory, it is as like as not that some of our ill-fated uncle's supporters would have

jumped over the barriers and gone for him then and there, and turned the affair into a small civil war. There was no difficulty about it, as Chastaigneraye's troop of the best blood of France, dressed in his colours (white and carnation), would have made precious short work, not only of Jarnac's party, which could not have been more than a hundred (colours, black and white), and himself into the bargain, but of all the keepers of the lists, judges, and everybody else too. If M. d'Aumale had given *the slightest sign* to encourage it, why—there was a bloody battle toward! For all those bravos were simply wild with indignation at the disaster and the impending death of their valiant champion and comrade. Their resentment knew no bounds. And let the reader note that, if only the French had been *as expert at tumults and seditions as they have become* (a curious compliment this!) *during the later Civil Wars*, then there is no shadow of doubt that these brave gentlemen, without waiting for M. d'Aumale or anybody, would have come on and played the piece by themselves!

Brantome is equally sure that the late Duke of Guise, his son, killed at Blois¹ on the very pinnacle of his ambitious enterprises, if *he* had ever had such an opportunity, would have seized it by the short hairs readily enough, and so managed the affair that the fame of it would have flown all over the world.

And, by the way, there was one of the judges (here we see that this particular distinction was part of their award) who held that De Jarnac should have been allowed to march round the camp in triumph, with trumpets blowing and drums beating. However, M.

¹ Henri I., Le Balafre (2), third Duke of Guise, born 1550, son of Francis, was assassinated, with his brother the Cardinal, by order of Henry III., at the States General of Blois, 1588.

de Boysy, his second, and a very sensible man, thought otherwise, and M. de Vandosme (afterwards King of Navarre)¹ dissuaded His Majesty (Henry III.), who had some idea of the kind up his sleeve, and inclined to the said judge's opinion, having soon forgotten his particular friend. Well, such is the world. But if they had acted upon it, it is quite certain a disturbance would have followed, for the provocation would have been positively too great. That is what the Marshal used to say: which shows that there is nothing like a moderate bearing of oneself in such cases.

A story which Brantome had only heard at second-hand illustrates further the volcanic violence latent in the society of his time.

On the assassination of the above-mentioned monarch, Henry III., at St. Cloud, a young gentleman named l'Isle Marivaut, who, having been much beloved by the King, felt his loss very keenly, was driven to such depths of despair that he resolved not to survive him, and, in order to secure a glorious death, challenged "*any member of the opposite party*" to meet him in the lists and fight. Another young gentleman, the Seigneur de Marolles,² no whit less brave and valiant, as he had shown on many occasions, instantly took him at his word.

At the appointed hour, then, these gallant warriors appeared in the lists as "men-at-arms," and each mounted on a good steed. M. de la Chastre, as good a soldier as he is captain, was second to Marolles, and when he had told him what to do Marolles asked

¹ Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henri Quatre.

² Father, M. de Pene tells us, of the famous collector Michel de Marolles.

whether his enemy was wearing a "casque" or a "salade."¹ When he answered, "Only a casque," "All right," said the combatant, "call me the greatest knave unhung if I don't give it him with my lance right in the middle of the head-piece and kill him." And so he did.

And—need we remind the reader?—he might have dragged the body about just as he pleased, or carried it off with him on a horse, or even an ass. Ah! "that had been done on one occasion in one of our wars. *I won't say where.*" (The allusion is to the treatment of Condé's body on the field of Jarnac. It was carried off on the back of a she-ass—an outrage, it has been thought, scarcely creditable to the Catholic party.)

Marolles, however, behaved quite nicely about *his* enemy's body, and left it to the friends and relatives to bury, contenting himself with the simple fact that he had been victorious, for which he received great honour in Paris. There is no doubt both he and Messrs. Du Maine and De la Chastre conducted themselves very sensibly in that affair, for outrage upon outrage—the thing was rather too much, just after the murder of the King, and "mischief might have come of it"—mischief more serious, he means, than the death of the poor foolish youth who was so deeply attached to his unworthy sovereign. It shows again, if the reader will only believe us, that courtesy and gentleness *are* really the best policy.

When the author was at Rome during the inter-

¹ Two species of helmets, the latter the larger and more substantial. "Salade" is hence used, like "lance" or "spear," as a term descriptive of a certain type of soldier.



ENGRAVED FRENCH MORION OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Burgess Collection, British Museum.

[To face p. 70

regnum of three months (*Sede Vacante*) following the death of Pope Paul IV.,¹ he was witness of several duels, among others, one fought by two Roman soldiers, who, by the way, had been excellent friends before.

They fought with morions on head and “sleeves of mail” of great length and size, affording considerable protection to the front of the body. Their offensive arms were sword and dagger, and each of them kept their guard low and close, and the body rather inclined in consequence, so as to make as much use of the said sleeves as possible to defend the body. In fact, they did this so effectively that neither made much of an attack on the body of his adversary, but mainly at the leg, where one soon inflicted a serious and gaping wound, from which the blood flowed freely. The wounded man on this made a fierce thrust and two rapid cuts in succession at the other, but with no success. Nay, more, he was unlucky enough in this violent exertion, and meeting the other’s parries, to let his dagger slip from his hand, so that he had only his sword left. But in spite of this mishap he put a bold face on the matter and kept up the fight, crying out to his antagonist, “Though I am only half armed, having lost my dagger, I’ll show you that I’m no coward.” To which the other briefly replied, “Well, you’d better. For I’ll take good care you don’t pick it up again, nor get a ha’porth of help or mercy from me.”

However, the wounded man, getting weaker every minute from loss of blood, though he did his best, could make no head against his skilful opponent, who simply waited on him, but then, seeing him tottering to fall

¹ Paola Caraffa, died 18th August, 1559. His successor, Pius IV., was not elected till four months later.

this way and that, declined to pursue his advantage to the death.

"Now," he said, "I'm not going to treat you like an enemy, but as an old comrade in arms."

So the seconds separated them and ended the combat, and the two were reconciled and became better friends than ever; the moral being surely "when fighting a particular friend *wear long sleeves*." At least, the two Corsicans who did not came to a dreadful end. This was another example witnessed in the Holy City, of the superfluous energy of the time. They wore sleeveless jackets or shirts of mail put on over an ordinary shirt, with no coat, although it was extremely cold, being late autumn. They had morions on their heads each mounted on the front, *with a short, sharp dagger for cutting and stabbing*.

This was a fancy of the combatant who thought himself the weaker or at any rate feared the other man's skill at wrestling, in case they closed. Besides, they had no other weapons but swords. Well, having entered the lists in solemn form, a good many blows were exchanged with no result at all. The stronger man, seeing this would never do, got to close quarters, and wrestling with his enemy, who could not get free of his hold, brought him quickly to the ground.

Unluckily for the weak man he fell undermost, but the strong man gained little by that, as he broke an arm in falling.

So there they lay on the ground, and just pecked at each other's faces, necks, and arms with the dagger contrivances fixed on their morions, till both were simply covered with ghastly wounds, and could do no more.

Brantome assures us that they fought like brave soldiers, or rather like a couple of infuriated Corsicans and nothing else, for their nation may fairly be called

the bravest in all Italy, without reflecting on any other.

Finally the seconds separated them in a most pitiable condition, without any particular credit or advantage attaching to one side or the other in honour, gallantry, or courtesy.

It is true one of them died about a month later and the other nearly followed his example from sheer grief at the event. For they too (so full of peril were the simplest human relations in those days!) had been the best of friends before, and had been reconciled, and had forgiven one another, neither expecting to survive the contest long.

Well, you see how wills and fortunes are apt to clash in these combats. Our author could easily rehearse scores of other cases illustrating the courtesies, and discourtesies, the horrid severities and the kindly favours shown by various duellists.

The catalogue would be endless, so he contents himself for the moment with those we have heard, merely begging to be allowed to add a word on some of the abuses which are done, committed, or happen in these combats.

One that stands quite by itself concerned the vexatious penalties and dangers involved in defying your enemies and sending them formal challenges, the elaborate subterfuges used to avoid receiving them, and the manifestoes which you have to have published—to clear your own character or damage your opponent's.

But that was simply nothing to the fabulous *expense* of the thing when, for example, your enemy insisted on your providing *every kind of arms that ever were heard of*, and would not say one single word to tell you

of the particular ones he really meant to fight with. If we imagine a modern French duellist demanding on his cartel the right to use a polo pony, a motor car, a hogspear, a harpoon, a Winchester repeater, and a Maxim gun, we shall form some idea of this grievance.

Something of this sort, by the way, occurred *in the case of the Seigneur de Jarnac and my poor uncle La Chastaigneraye*. Has the reader ever heard the story? No. Well, De Jarnac insisted, in a special cartel, on the provision of no less than thirty different kinds of armament, for foot and horseback; nay, he even specified the *kinds of horse*—to wit, coursers, bloodhorses from Spain and Turkey, thoroughbreds, cobs, some in harness with ears and tail clipped, some saddled in jennet style,¹ some in the Mantuan, as it was then called, some with large military saddles, some with saddles of polished leather, some with heavy plated armour, and so on.

The object of all this was not only to take his adversary by surprise, but to put him to enormous expense, and exhaust his resources. So that if uncle Chastaigneraye had not had considerable means of his own, and besides that been assisted by his good lord the King and various kind friends who came forward and provided him with funds, he would have been quite unequal to the burden, which was really a grave scandal. In fact, as he observed on receiving the cartel, "Jarnac means to challenge my wits and my purse."

It was on his way to the relief of Malta that Brantome met a worthy Italian gentleman of the well-known family of *Farnese*, who was introduced to him by M. d'Aymard, an old and intimate friend. He told a story of a quarrel he had had with some rascally

¹ See note, p. 46.

fellow who did everything to evade him by ruses and tricks, and subterfuges and chicanery, and in the end was so successful as to cause Farnese to expend *his whole fortune* of 100,000 crowns sterling. At least the poor man had only 200 left of all this wealth, and to avoid absolute beggary he was literally obliged to join the crusade at Malta, at the age of forty, or he would have had nothing to support him in his old age!

You can imagine what scandal and suffering is involved in all this, seeing that even if you defend your honour and save your life, you have to spend the rest of it in absolute destitution!

"And all that is allowed by the laws of duelling," which made no sort of provision for the aged or infirm, who had perhaps spent their lives (as it is clear that many of Brantome's friends did) in this singular industry!

Another dreadful trial of a less material kind was the overweening confidence of people who had what was considered a "just cause" for quarrel (of which they made oath before entering the lists), who seemed to think they must therefore be victorious as a matter of course. Indeed, their seconds and supporters always told them so, much as if they had a patent for it from the Almighty Himself, quite oblivious of all their *past* offences, and of the fact that it is just such occasions as these (as every schoolboy knows) that are selected by Providence for our own condign and exemplary punishment!

Plenty of examples of this had been seen. "I will give you two," says Brantome (surely a moderate allowance) where all the parties—challenger, defendant, conqueror and conquered alike—were in the wrong.

For instance (without mentioning any names), he had heard at Rome of two gentlemen of that city who quarrelled on account of a certain opprobrious accusation, and the one who was guilty of the vice of which he accused the other compelled him to declare his (the victor's) honour and innocence!

Here, of course, we are confronted with the "secret counsels" of the One above who deals out justice, equity, and pity as He pleases, though there was a feeling, it was true, that the odds ran in favour of the good cause.

That was why the Seigneur de Carrouges made such careful inquiries into the conduct of his wife and the state of her conscience, to be sure upon this point. Mendoza, too, did much the same in the similar case of the Duchess of Savoy. Indeed, he even went so far as to disguise himself as a friar and hear her confession, all with the best of motives, as, if he had found out anything wrong, the best people thought he would not have undertaken the combat in her honour, to which, as it was, he betook himself with perfect confidence.

Still, that gallant nobleman and brave cavalier, Renaud de Montauban, was not quite so exacting as this in the case of the fair Ginevra, daughter of the King of Scotland, for we have it on his own authority that he would have fought for her just as readily had she thrown herself into the arms of his friend as if she had been the most circumspect of women, for which he deserves double credit. Every gallant knight ought, in fact, to defend the honour of women in general, whether they have wronged him or not; that is to say, if "wrong" means in a fair and virtuous lady to be kind to her loving servitor, and spare his life. And a hundred examples might be cited to prove that it was the duty of all good cavaliers to maintain and defend the good fame of their ladies by word and deed, even if they

were the most abandoned women in the world, and they knew them for such, and their antagonists and everybody else knew it too. Otherwise they would have been counted poltroons and cowards, altogether unworthy—if this point had not been decided before—of feminine affection, the mere common sense of the matter being, *en parler sainement*, that every woman likes to be thought virtuous and respectable, *however* bad she may be, on which matters the author would refer us to his wondrous manual dealing with these and kindred matters.¹

There are combatants who, apart from this special branch of their business, trust so much in their own stout hearts and good swords that they undertake almost any quarrel merely for the fun of the thing, and even when totally in the wrong. It is to be noted, however, that in these cases *they very often get the worst of it*. Not that even under such circumstances a woman's reputation is necessarily the worse, the whole result being put down to the Powers above or the chances of war. This happened, we are assured, in innumerable cases. The question whether, that being so, there was any conceivable object in fighting about the matter at all never seems to have occurred to any one. How a modern actuary would have estimated the "risk" of entering the lists with a bad cause, or no cause at all, one cannot guess, but certainly he would derive little help from these lucubrations, in which Brantome appears quite as anxious to "hedge," to "run with the hare and hunt with the hounds," as the most cautious of duellists.

He had read, however, in the excellent *History of France*, written by that famous chronicler Paulus

¹ *Vies des Dames Galantes*, Disc. 7, &c.

Æmylius,¹ an early case entirely free from all these "fine shades" of casuistry. The hero, Count Robert of Artois, a brave and valiant captain in his day, if ever there was one, distinguished himself by deserting his country and going over to the English side in the war, with the result of causing an immense amount of misery, death, and destruction in the time of King Philip de Valois² and King John.

That is by the way. But being anxious to make a claim to the earldom of Flanders, he brought forward a collection of title-deeds which he had caused to be carefully forged for the purpose. When these documents were set before the King, His Majesty not unnaturally remonstrated in the character of an indulgent monarch, relative, and friend. The thing was too barefaced, he urged—scarcely honourable—and the Count ought really not to press the point. Robert, however, who was one of your *haut-en-main* aristocrats, whom not even kings could "set down," replied cheerfully, "Forged! not a bit of it; as genuine as possible!" and he would like to prove it on the body of anybody who dared suggest the contrary.

Thus Count Robert, without a blush, the fact being that the only deeds he ever troubled about were those wrought by his own trusty lance.

But did any one ever hear of a vassal addressing his sovereign with such brazen arrogance? However, the King, mastering his emotion "like a sensible man," did

¹ Paolo Emilio (1460-1529) *De rebus gestis Francorum*, fol. 1539. Brantome is the author of a historical parallel between Count Robert and the Constable de Bourbon so often alluded to in this Memoir (*Hommes Ill. et Gr. Capitaines Etrangers*, Disc. 20).

² Philip VI. (1328-1350). In his reign began the Hundred Years' War with England. The incident (which dates about 1330) is described very shortly in Froissart. A point in the litigation between the Count and the King was supported by a forged letter (*Chroniques*, ed. 1559-61, i. 15).

not answer back (*ne luy sonna grands mots làdessus*), though it was observable that there was a very marked coldness in the relations of the two ever after; and this was the cause of much ill-will and suffering and dissension not only between them, but among the whole nation as well.

You can guess, at any rate, how much a gentleman of this temper was concerned about the justice of his quarrel, since he made so light of going into the lists with a crime like that upon his soul! He was seriously of opinion that the Almighty would be just as pleased to help him whether his cause was bad or good.

But for that he might perhaps have acted like another gentleman Brantome had heard of in Italy, who, having entered the lists with a shocking bad "cause" on his hands, suffered awful qualms of remorse till a brilliant idea occurred to him for *turning it into a good one*.

So having confronted his enemy, when they were just about to cross swords he pretended to be afraid, turned his back on the foe, and ran away. The enemy falling guilelessly into the trap, ran after him, exclaiming in his language (the conventional lingo of melodrama), "Ha! coward, thou fliest!" Poor man! Of course the supposed coward turned upon him instantly, crying, "*You lie. Now I've got a good cause. Come on.*"

The original one, he frankly admitted, did not suit him; he would "leave it there" while he settled the other matter. But the reader will surely see what scandals this practice might induce.

A far more curious one concerned the selection and imposition of particular arms. Cases had been heard of (in Italy) where, supposing the challenging party had only one eye, the defendant would try and insist on his

wearing a helmet with a flap either on the right or left side, *which conveniently covered it up!* This, however, was judged to be a little too brazen an impertinence for human nature to put up with. But even in that case—would you believe it?—the seconds had the audacity to propose to argue the point and prove they were in the right. However, it was decided against them, though even then the combat was postponed, and put off till another day, and it was thought very possible that the gallant gentleman who made the selection had simply this object in view.

Survival even for a few days, a week, perhaps a year, had still a certain attraction. The one day, a man fancies, will bring another in its train, and make life a little longer, as one of the captains of Brutus and Cassius remarked just before the battle of Philippi.¹

They were engaged in a conference as to whether it should be put off for a year or not, alleging various excellent reasons *pro* and *con*. His principal argument was that whatever else happened, you would live so much the longer, and that that in itself was something considerable.

To hark back to our original starting-point. In the time of the Prince de Melfi there was a duel fought in Piedmont between a young gentleman serving in the ranks and a bragging Gascon sergeant who had one day insulted him. So having taken the advice of his corporal and friends, he demanded to meet him in the

¹ A certain Atellius advised the postponement of the campaign till next winter, and when Brutus asked him why, replied, "If I gain nothing else I shall at least live the longer." See Plutarch's *Lives*, familiar to Brantome doubtless in Amyot's famous translation (fol., Paris, 1559), from which Sir Thomas North made the version which played so prominent a part in Shakspearian literature.

lists, which was duly arranged. The fencing-master with whom the young gentleman had practised for a month, advised his pupil (to whom, as we learn a little later, the choice of arms had been contemptuously surrendered) to fight simply in his clothes, with dagger and sword, and a *steel collar round the neck*, with points as sharp as razors above and below, that forced you to hold your head up as stiffly as possible, for if you bent it ever so little the spikes ran into you like anything, and came near to cutting your throat.

All this was thoughtfully contrived in the interests of the young man who was short of stature, as it enabled him to look up at his adversary quite comfortably, while the latter could not look down at all without the risk of nearly cutting his head off by his own unaided exertions.

Consequently the young gentleman despatched him very easily in a couple of strokes. Of course the point was raised and argued between the judges and seconds, but it came to nothing, mainly, it would seem, because the Gascon had bragged so, and refused to choose proper arms when he might have done so.

But people might say what they liked. A confounded death-trap of a collar like this was really an outrageous abuse; yet, at the same time, when you come to think of it, a highly ingenious contrivance most effective for its purpose. *Que voulez vous?* would, we feel, be the modern French summary of this eternal conflict between moral right and practical utility. The phrase was clearly no part of Brantome's vocabulary.

But there was one definite question Brantome had heard decided by good authorities in the course of his tour in Italy, concerning this said choice of

weapons and the other party's acceptance of them. That was, that if the cartel of challenge contained the proviso "with the usual arms," then your family solicitor (we mean your second, if he was worth his salt) would draw his pen through this vague phrase and substitute *such as are used by gentlemen and persons competent to judge of such matters*.

If you did not see to this, either personally or by your representatives, it would be too late to urge the point when you come into the arena. An unconditional acceptance, of course, bound you to take any sort of arms that might be given you, however unusual.

That at least is the opinion of one who can only speak with his usual diffidence, referring the decision to more competent critics. But personally his advice would be that one could hardly be too cautious in all these little matters.

In fact, the sharpest of police-court attorneys would have had his hands full in safeguarding the interests of an inexperienced chevalier of those days against a veteran or *rusé* opponent.

Thus, to fight with no defensive armour at all was uncivilised, worthy only of a "brute beast"; but there was a golden mean in the matter, also various *supercheries* or confidence tricks.

For instance, in a certain duel between two gentlemen at Rome the one who had the choice of weapons, included in his list defensive armour which covered the whole body from head to foot, leaving only a small space unprotected—about twice the size of the palm of your hand—just over the region of the heart. The merest detail, of course. One can "see from here" the warrior's representative suggesting, after the manner of Shylock, that this little provision was a mere playful and harmless formality.

As a matter of fact his client had been practising and taking lessons for a whole year past in the one feat of hitting this particular spot on the body, so as to make sure of killing his man at the first or second lunge.

The reader need not wonder at so elaborate a rehearsal of these little effects, for in the good old days, even when a duel had been agreed upon by the parties, the actual event was often delayed by all kinds of haggling and chicanery—like a Chancery suit of the early nineteenth century—for a year or two!

In such cases, moreover, there was a natural secrecy observed about the preparatory training and instruction. Certain masters of fence would only give their services on the condition that you should never disclose what you had learnt even to your dearest friends. Bribery and all kinds of devices were employed in order to get at these secrets of the art, so much so that a good many instructors would never admit a living soul to their fencing rooms or the apartments where they gave lessons except the pupil concerned. And then they used to look everywhere, even under the beds; would examine the walls to see if there were any cracks or holes people might look through. Such care they took of the life and honour of their pupils. In fact, their enthusiasm was hardly surpassed by that of the actual combatants, in whose fortunes they considered their own honour and interest about equally involved.

The author himself had made acquaintance in Italy—at Rome or elsewhere—with professors of the kind who simply would not have told him one of these precious secrets for all the wealth of the world; in fact, he had tried to worm such confidences out of them by every art that he knew, and failed.

Among special arts and devices must be mentioned that of the gentleman at Milan who had a couple of pairs of swords forged for him of the kind known as "Vitrine." The epithet does not mean that they were made of glass—like the Venetian daggers of which we have all heard—but that the weapons were so tempered as to "go" like that material, if you did not understand exactly how to handle them and deliver your thrust. Everything with such delicate instruments depended, as we can well believe, on the way of doing it. Thus the gentleman's antagonist went to work in the usual fashion, and at his very first onset found sword and dagger fly to pieces, as housemaids say of other glass-ware, in his hands.

His antagonist, who had thoughtfully provided that no other kind of arms or armour should be used, promptly ran him through the brisket and stretched him dead upon the ground—so carefully had he mastered the trick of this particular weapon.

The seriousness of Brantome's judgment on these matters may be estimated by the fact that he begins the anecdote by saying that it illustrates a much *less* serious abuse than the unfair choice of weapons, while he ends by frankly admitting that it was a good deal worse than the assassination of people at street-corners or in shady woods; in fact, positively inexcusable. Still, under the "old" laws of the duel that was the sort of thing that might and did happen.

A capital story one heard at Naples "the first time I was there," that at the time when King Charles conquered the place¹ there was a duel between an

¹ In 1495 Charles VIII. rapidly overran the kingdom of Naples, but was shortly forced to abandon it. In 1501 Louis XII., in alliance with Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Aragon, conquered the same territory again. But on a difference arising between the Spaniards and French the latter were defeated by Gonzalez de



ARBLAST, WITH WINDING APPARATUS.

Burgess Collection, British Museum. [To face p. 84.]

Italian and a Gascon captain, and the Gascon had choice of arms, in the exercise of which he showed a lively regard for his own interests.

He sent his enemy—what do you think? Why a great *lumbering arblast a l'armatot*, as it was then called, and for that matter still is, with winding apparatus all complete that hung from your waistbelt. Needless to say the Italian and his friends declined it altogether, on the ground that such things were not "usual" arms at all, but, on the contrary, perfectly outlandish.

The Gascons replied in brief "Fiddlepin's end!"—It was the weapon of all others at which *their nation* had attained the greatest proficiency—only second, in fact, to that of the Genoese, who, in the time of the Holy War, had made the thing a tremendous success (*en vavoient fait rage*) and done wonders with it, so much so that Philip of Valois had sent right down to Genoa to get some of them to help him in the unfortunate battle of Crécy—though, by the way, if the chronicles are true, they were of little use to him when they got there.

Well, when the whole history of the matter had been threshed out, it was decided that the selection was quite justifiable and the Italian must make the best of it.

The Gascon (of course they are unrivalled with this particular weapon) had wound up his machine twice over and got a couple of bolts into the body of the

Cordova in a battle fought on the Garigliano, 1504, and Louis XII. in turn gave up his claims to Naples. The Neapolitan territory (a great part of S. Italy), on the extinction of the Angevin dynasty (1435), had passed under that of Aragon. United to Sicily (which was ruled by the Aragons since 1282, the Sicilian Vespers), it formed the kingdom known as the "Two Sicilies," and continued to be governed by Spanish viceroys till 1707.

wretched Italian before the poor man had ever strung his at all! So that combat was very quickly decided.

At the same time let the reader observe the use of these weapons, as of the arquebus, is condemned by the best authorities on duelling for one reason—that an honourable combat ought to be decided by individual valour, and not by arms.

Brantome thought this a very feeble argument. How could you fight (or exhibit your valour) without arms? The thing was to employ both at once. And for that matter, in the case of soldiers who carried that particular weapon (the arquebus) *and used it every day of their lives*, the thing was recognised and allowed by some critics. The stipulations clearly indicate the *real* objection (specified later) that these weapons were extremely likely to endanger the umpires and keepers of the lists (not to mention the spectators), at whom our author vents a rather unkindly sneer for being so anxious about their own personal safety.

Apart from this there had been plenty of combats on horseback in recent times with pistols in which brave and valiant gentlemen had been engaged and killed each other in proper form. He could easily mention two or three if it were worth the trouble. As to the aforesaid abuses and scandals, and nefarious devices, especially those invented and practised by the Italians, “if one had nothing to do but to write about them,” well—he could go on entertaining us for ever.

A grievance of a different kind was to be noted in the rule, that if a combatant whether advancing or retiring, or parrying a blow or manœuvring in any way, came in contact with the barrier, or stockade, or boundary of the lists, he was considered beaten. This was rather a hardship, seeing a man might easily, without knowing or meaning it, when retreating or luring his enemy on, or just preparing for a fierce attack upon



CROSSBOWS, ARMS, AND ARMOUR.

Romance of Tewrdancks.

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him, accidentally touch the barriers ; and there did not seem much sense or justice then in calling him conquered. Of course it was a different matter if the enemy pressed him with so much vigour that he kept retreating as if losing confidence, and merely defending himself, or again if one of the combatants closed with the other, and instead of throwing him on the ground, turned and wrestled so as to make his antagonist touch the bounds, when he might rightly be considered beaten. Though it would be more satisfactory (and, we must think, better fun for the spectators) if he threw him right over the barrier and out of the lists altogether.

That would be truly creditable for the victor and most ignominious for the defeated, as it would be impossible for him to come back and enter the lists or reclaim his arms. That happened sometimes in the contests one saw in Italy when such conditions were agreed upon by judges and seconds before the affair began. But the other method was neither sensible nor satisfactory, though (like so many other questionable practices) it was recognised by the Lombard laws.

The worst and most shocking thing of all was that under those barbarous customs, and by modern Italian usage, if either or both of the combatants died on the lists the Church absolutely declined to receive or bury them, or to allow their bodies to be interred in holy or sanctified ground any more than if they were Arabs or Saracens ! There was cruelty, if you like ! Though, strangely enough, they might hear Mass and go to confession *before* the combat and take the sacrament. Dying in that state they die good Christians : and if the chances of war go against them one would like to know why they should be deprived of religious burial.

Of course people gave a lot of reasons for it (reasons in Brantome's society were more plentiful than blackberries), among others (to return to a subject already touched upon) that if they died in the lists this must be by the Divine permission, showing that their quarrel was an unjust one, and that they perished, consequently, like criminals, the lists being merely a convenient substitute for the gibbet in such cases, when there happened to be no proofs of the crime, because when they came to be conquered in this fashion it was to be considered a Divine judgment and the crime established. "And the Lord knows (as I have observed before) whether the conqueror has not often most of the right on his side."

Well, one must stop somewhere. This discourse of duels might be prolonged for ever, but that would be a regrettable reflection on the authors who have written so well on the subject—to wit, the Signori Mutio,¹ Alciati,² and Paris de Puteo,³ and a vast number of other learned counsellors in the art—for in their time these combats were so fashionable that there were doctors of duelling who were consulted like advocates are in matters of law.

The serious history of the time seems to intrude with a strange impropriety into Brantome's wondrous comedy.

In our days, he tells us, the whole practice of duelling has been abolished throughout the whole of Christendom by the Council of Trent,⁴ so much so that (and

¹ Mutio, *Giustinopolitano*. Il Duello, con le risposte cavalleresche. 8vo, 1560 and 1588.

² Alciati, Andrea (author of the *Emblems*, 1492-1550).

³ *De Singulari certamine*, French ed., Paris, 1550, v., p. 16 n.

⁴ 1545-1563.

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here we become involved in one of Brantome's characteristic sentences) twenty years ago a certain knight of Malta, called Don Juan de Guzman, one of the Guzmans of Spain, whom our author had seen, and a fine fellow too, besides being of good family, brave and strong, though he was extremely short-sighted and always wore spectacles, so that people said, "Here comes Don Guzman with his spectacles." Well, he was really a very fine fencer, the connection of which with the Council of Trent is not at first easy to see.

Don Guzman of the goggles had a quarrel with another Spaniard, not of his order or religion, and as it was impossible for them to fight it out in due form, *with safety to themselves* (note this) either in Italy, Spain, or anywhere else in Christendom, they arranged and agreed between them to meet at Vallome¹ in the territory of the Grand Signor, seeing it was no great distance across the sea from Italy,² and they sent and asked a "field" of the Turkish Viceroy,³ a renegade Spaniard, commanding in that place, whose acquaintance they had made before.

He assented, readily promising every security. But the authorities of the Inquisition of the kingdom of Naples having got wind of it, forbade them by public proclamation and notices, under pain of death, so that they dared not take any further step; in fact, had they been caught doing so, they would have suffered severe punishment, of which indeed they ran some risk afterwards on various grounds alleged by the Inquisitors.

That was what Brantome had heard. And it was a thing strictly forbidden by the ancient laws of our

¹ Vallome—*Avlona*.

² La Pouille (Apulia). The mediæval name for the country.

³ *Sangiac*. The term used to describe a province of the Turkish Empire.

duellist doctors, and even by the aforesaid Paris de Puteo, to let an infidel be umpire in a combat between Christians, seeing that he, being a heretic, was equally the enemy of both "duellianti," as the Italians call them.

That, one might think, would rather make for his impartiality ; but it was clearly an indecent abomination that a pagan should be allowed to feast his eyes on the shedding of Christian blood, the very spectacle to delight him, or much more that he should be allowed to judge in such matters.

It is true that Dr. de Puteo says that the assistance of Turks and infidels may be called in by Christians against other Christians, as some of the kings of Sicily did (as recorded in the History of Naples), and also Francis I. and Henry II.

In fine, it was a "much of a muchness" (*ce n'est pas jus verd mais verd jus*) one way or the other, and in France and England and elsewhere, where the authority of the Council of Trent has not been received or accepted, the combats above described may be fought, though they are seldom heard of nowadays.

The pathetic disappointment of the spectacled Don Guzman, and the burning question of the employment of more or less "savage" auxiliaries (not unparalleled in more modern times), represent only a feeble attempt on the author's part to get away from his really inexhaustible topic.

In a moment we are back again in the arena, listening to "poor uncle Chastaigneraye's complaints" of what his nephew most unreasonably describes as "another abuse." We cannot agree with him. The fact is, it was a part, and by no means an unnecessary

part, of the business of a "second" to examine (*taster*) the weapons, clothes, and person of his champion's adversary, to see not only that he had no secret arms of offence or defence (of which more anon) concealed about him, but also no *magical charms*, "*wicked words*," *mottoes*, or even *prayers*, surreptitiously inscribed anywhere upon his person.

La Chastaigneraye was very indignant at this process, and protested in his self-confident fashion—"Did they think that to fight such a man as Jarnac he would want to borrow any extraneous assistance of that kind, any help but that of his own strong arm?" "Very possibly not," the seconds might have answered; but others did.

In Italy, that home of duellistic chicanery, various champions were found on such examination to be decorated with "druggeries and sorceries" of the kind. And so, just in order to avoid detection by these researches, gentlemen used to have their heads shaved some time before the date of the combat, and any amount of magical and cabalistic characters inscribed thereon ("as they do on the faces of slaves in Spain") in order to render themselves invincible, or at least difficult to beat. In fact, there were quite a lot of people, there and elsewhere, who went into a campaign with such inscriptions on their bodies, and found them a wonderful preservative against fire and sword. Brantome himself had known cases in which they were most effective—also others where they failed.

The whole practice, however, he thought a trifle absurd. At any rate, and speaking generally, it was hardly worth while objecting to your opponent's wearing a mere shirt of "Our Lady of Chartres," or a few relics from Jerusalem, our Lady of Loretto, or Montserrat, or even a few pious orisons which, *as you couldn't get them off*, it was advisable to leave on;

at least, such was the opinion of a good many seconds. Though there again a question might be raised, *if one party had some on him and the other not*, as the combatants ought, of course, to be equally matched in all respects.

A more comprehensive grievance of the period—vaguely indicative as it was of the dawn of common sense and humanity—arose when the challenged man evinced *not the slightest wish to fight at all!* This cut at the root of the institution.

Take the case of those two Spanish captains of the garrison of Gayette,¹ which one heard on the spot and at the time, in the Year of Grace, 1558.

It happened in this wise:—

One Lunel, a cavalier of Aragon, was in a certain street with other military gentlemen, among them a certain Castilian called Pedro Tamayo, and they were all talking together, when up comes a peasant with a basket of very fine fish, which are plentiful in these parts.

Tamayo wanted to buy them, on which Lunel selected and took out the best of the lot, at which Tamayo was, not unnaturally, annoyed.

Lunel offered every kind of apology, which Tamayo declined to accept, even though the other offered to pay him the price. The wrangle grew fiercer every minute, till Tamayo said he'd be ashamed if his servants weren't *better gentlemen than Lunel!*

Before the words were out of his mouth Lunel's

¹ Gaeta, a strongly fortified town situated on a promontory overlooking the beautiful bay of that name, fifty miles north-west of Naples. In the citadel is the tomb of the Constable de Bourbon killed at the sack of Rome in 1529.

hand was on his sword, but the bystanders, captains and soldiers who were there, interfered and restrained him.

At that point Tamayo very prudently withdrew into the house of Captain Montesdoça, which was close by, and recognising that he had not the courage to fight the other man, kept out of his way and remained in hiding for a long time till he had the opportunity of getting away into Spain, and changing his courtier habit for that of a churchman and priest.

For a whole year Lunel looked for him everywhere, publishing and sticking up manifestoes of defiance in all the principal towns of Italy (does any collector possess one of these *Affiches*?) and in Spain, particularly in the place where he (Tamayo) was born, which happened to be Avila, and all at considerable expense and risk, for it was obligatory to employ authentic copies made by the Royal scribes—or so they said.

Tamayo, however, now a priest, was not the least disturbed, replying that the new habit he wore would not allow him to fight, and he must firmly decline to receive all cartels, challenges, &c. So his despairing adversary had no resource but to circulate notices, as aforesaid, and make it quite clear, at any rate, that it was no fault of his there was not a gallant combat to be seen. And the public recognised that he had done everything that was right and honourable—though the laugh went rather against him for having been involved in all this money and expense and waste of tissue (*sueurs*) in hunting for a man who had got off by this humorous bit of trickery and evaded the duel, to live henceforth free from all fear of wars and combats, and stabs and sword-thrusts.

Yes (concludes our author, checking himself in what was very nearly a serious reflection), that was a truly ingenious device if you wanted to preserve your life, and made a capital story.

Of course there were of old time plenty of people who had done the same, and become priests or joined some religious fraternity so as to be no longer exposed to the hazards of warfare.

Very differently from those others who gave up "the long robe" and their ecclesiastical revenues to follow the profession of arms; and fine men some of them were too, as Brantome had told us elsewhere.

Some individuals—merely to be relieved from pressing anxiety *not* to be challenged or run through the brisket—had even bought from French monarchs a right of exemption.

But the general practice stigmatised was really only fit for the comic stage: if we can imagine some braggart captain going about offering to slit any one's nose for so much a week, or murder whom you pleased, and then when it came to fisticuffs, replying that he was only a priest or a lay brother. Clown and pantaloon would manage to knock some fun out of him.

But there (*laissons ces contes*), the reader must try and remember that the duel, as an institution, *has been abolished by the inspired Council of Trent.*

Though, by the way, if you simply wanted to fight, there was a method practised at Naples, and still in popular use, which was known as the combat *à la mazza*; in other words (as explained to our author) what we may call the "hedgerow" or "cross-country duel."

The word "mazza" is a corruption in the Neapolitan patois of *Matta* (*Mata*), a Spanish word meaning a hedge or bush, as there is a good deal of commerce between the Neapolitans and the Spaniards, who formerly

ruled there. There were other derivations given, but this seemed the best.

Contrasted with the straight-laced formalities and punctilios of which we have heard so much, the duel *à la mazza* should have the reader's sympathy at once, as a comfortable amateurish "rough-and-tumble" affair. Its method—or want of method—must have been an immense relief to the professional assassin weary of the haggling and chicanery and the stuffy moral atmosphere of the "Champ clos." It is true seconds were employed. But the thing was fought out far from the busy town, in the verdant meadows or shady forests, among the hedges and bushes—after a fashion not unknown, we believe, in the backwoods of America.

Academic authority, as we might expect, was altogether against the institution, on the ground—*forsooth!*—that the combatants did not wear "defensive armour," but only a sword and cloak, or perhaps only a dagger—implements which are not regarded as "defensive," because, we are to understand, they do not of themselves cover the body, though they may be made to do so by a dexterous fencer. And professionals insisted on having the body covered. They said that to fight otherwise was only to court death as the brute beasts do. Which, it may be replied, is all very well and good; but when you come to fight, covered or uncovered, you have to come resolved to conquer or die. And, in fact, do not those combatants deserve most praise who bring with them a good stout heart, and not a load of cumbersome armour, in which, moreover, there may be involved, as we have seen, so much dishonest trickery?

The combat ought really to be decided just as it arises, without having resort to all these complicated varieties of armament, but simply with those that are

to hand at the moment, sword and cloak—or sword and dagger—with armour or without it.

And that, let the reader note, was the opinion of a good many brave men. As to the manner of the fray, if you could not always count upon courtesy or indulgence in the serious and formal combats already described, there was just as little of that in the rustic or hedgerow duel.

A more regrettable irregularity was that the seconds or appellants—in these combats at Naples—when they saw their principals engaged, used to say (and that although they had all been the best of friends before): “Look here, what is the use of our standing here doing nothing? A fine idea that we should simply look on at their killing one another! Let us fight too.”

And *so they did*—often as not—all four of them, from mere light-heartedness and without the slightest ill-feeling.

It was just in the same spirit of gaiety (for there was a truce at the time) that when the French army was in Naples in the time of Louis XII. the thirteen Spaniards—they began it—challenged thirteen Frenchmen. That, in fact, was the origin of this kind of combat.

The French—the Lord knows—responded readily enough, and were punctual enough in their attendance on the appointed day. Brantome had seen the place, which was just outside the town of Monervine. Some of the people there took particular care to point it out to him.

Every one, it seems, exhibited the proper amount of bravery; and historians of the event have recorded, as Brantome had also heard tell at Naples and about there, that the Spaniards had the best of it, and that owing to

their adoption of peculiar tactics of their own, against which there is, it seems, nothing to be said.

The two troops were armed as cavalry (*gens d'armes*) with lances, and their principle was at the first onset not to attack their enemies' persons but to go for their horses, according to a well-known Spanish maxim at the time: "When the horse is down the man-at-arms is done for."¹ French authorities describe the result differently, but agree that the idea of the enemy was a good one and succeeded brilliantly, in so far that most of the Frenchmen's horses were killed. But the valiant Bayard, and the brave M. d'Orose, who managed to keep their chargers uninjured, restored the balance, "as I have shown in my *Rodomontades Espagnoles*, where the famous Captain Gonzalez himself confesses that his people did not do quite so well as he thought and expected when he sent them out, and I quote his very words."²

It was a belief among the Spaniards that from the date of this combat, French influence in the realm (of Naples) steadily declined, on the theory that such incidents are damaging to a whole community (*à tout un général*), as indeed was commonly believed by many great captains, Spanish, Italian, and French, notably the Marshal de Biron, who never allowed or approved these challenges, defiances, or duels in an army, whether they were between one enemy and another or between two of the same side. He held that all that sort of thing only served as a spectacle to the rabble, corrupted the

¹ "Muerto el Cavallo, perdido el hombre d'armas."

² In the *Rodomontades Espagnoles*, where, by the way, the number of the combatants is specified as twelve and the result as extremely ambiguous. Such also was the answer of the messenger when the "Great Captain" asked how things had gone. "Sir, our men behaved well," to which the significant reply was, "They were meant to do better."

conduct of the campaign, and sometimes wasted important opportunities which occur at such moments, besides causing a couple of brave men to go killing each other when they might be winning battles for their sovereign; also that it was much better to fix your attention on serious business than on these trivial animosities.

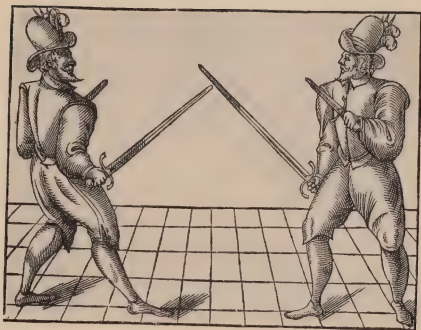
In Charles VII.'s time, too, there was a similar challenge and combat near Argenton, of twenty Frenchmen against twenty English, who were discomfited and defeated. Here again it is to be observed that they (the defeated party) were never very successful afterwards, but in the course of a year gradually lost their hold of Normandy.

In the reign of Henry II., again, a similar case occurred in Piedmont between M. de Nemours and the Marquis de Pescayre—three combatants on each side. The result was not satisfactory. "I describe it in the Life of M. de Nemours, in my book which treats of the Great Captains of the last hundred years."¹

Many other examples, too, could be cited of old times, but they would mostly be stale. It is better therefore, to come to modern cases in France during the last twenty years:

To begin with that of Quelus and d'Antraguët—those were the names of the two principals, and they fought for ladies.

¹ *Hommes Illustres et Grands Cap. Fr.*, Disc. 77. Nemours and Pescayre broke a lance together and then raised their visors and embraced like the best of friends, and conversed while the other champions were fighting. The result was doubtful, though several were killed, including a Count Caraffa, of over fifty years of age. He was run through the body by M. de Moncha, whose lance came out four feet the other side.



DUEL WITH SWORD AND DAGGER.

Meyer: *Kunst des Fechtens*, 1600.

[To face p. 98.

Anraguet's seconds and *thirds* (we have not had this variety before) were Riberac and Chombert (Schomberg), junior, a German. Quelus had for supporters Maugiron and Livarot.¹

In this combat all the seconds (and thirds) joined in the fray—again rather for the mere fun of fighting than from any ill-will to each other.

It was a fine combat, and people compared it to that of the Horatii and Curiatii, the Romans and Albans, as nothing of the kind had been seen in France for ever so long, with such numbers engaged and without any defensive armour. The difference was, however, that two of the modern combatants remained alive, whereas only one of the others did. The survivors were Anraguet and Livarot. Anraguet was opposed to Livarot, Riberac to Maugiron, and Livarot to Schomberg. As, for some unexplained reason, they fought near the ramparts and gate of St. Antoine at 3 a.m. on a summer morning, there were no spectators of the brave deeds of these heroes, except a few poor people, who, however, gave such account of the affair as they could. Quelus was not killed on the spot. He survived four or five days by the aid of the surgeons and a special visit from the King, who was particularly fond of him. Still, he did die—after that brief respite—for he was desperately wounded.

He complained bitterly of Anraguet's having a dagger when he had none, but only a sword, and so had to parry blows with his hand, which was in consequence *all cut to pieces*! In fact, when they met in the lists he had plaintively remarked to his opponent, "You have a dagger and I have not," to which the other replied simply, "The more fool you to

¹ On the fate of Livarot, see post, p. 107.

have left it behind you. We are here to fight, not to discuss punctilios!"¹

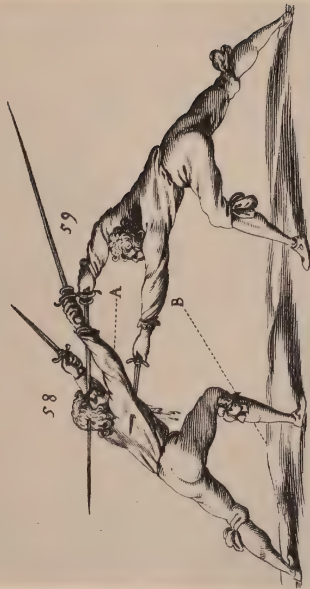
It is true there were people who said (what will not people say?) that it was rather sharp practice—one man's having a dagger to the good, if there had been an understanding that it was not to be used, but only the sword. That might be so, but Anraguet distinctly said he had never heard a word of any such condition. Other people argued that from mere chivalrous generosity he ought to have thrown away his dagger. Well, that is just the point ("*C'est a scavoir s'il le devoit?*") Ought he? A question for wiser heads than ours.

Though, on that particular point, there is the example of a gentleman of Anjou, La Fautriere by name, who engaged in a combat in an old farm-yard, shut in by four low walls (on which, of course, his seconds and other supporters sat and looked on). One of the parties was a young d'Aubanye, of Angoulême, from near Ruffec, a gallant sprig and a bit of a braggart, who modelled himself on M. de Bussy, or fancied so. (He only succeeded in making himself a bit ridiculous; but that is by the way.)

¹ This famous combat is better described in the Memoirs of Pierre l'Estoile (*Journal du regne de Henri III.*) under date April 27, 1578. A concise epitaph was composed in French for three of the combatants:—

"Recoi, Seigneur en ton giron
Quelus, Schomberg, and Maugiron,"

and a more elaborate one in Latin for Quelus alone. The King, it is gratifying to know, gave superb funerals to the three Frenchmen, and even tombs in Royal style. But on the "execution" of the Guises the excited populace destroyed these monuments, which are, however, to be seen in Corrozet's *Antiquitez de Paris*. 8vo, 1587-8 (Duchât).



USE OF SWORD AND DAGGER.

Alfieri: *Arte di maneggiar la Spada*, 1653.

[To face p. 100.

Well, this d'Aubanye, were we about to say, had been five years at Rome learning the use of arms, and especially of the sword alone, of that famous Master Paternostrier, so much so that when they came into the lists Aubanye said to his adversary—

“Brother, I am only used to fighting with the sword alone, and have no dagger, so please put down yours.” The other with the utmost readiness threw it away over the farmyard wall. Yet by the greatest good fortune he was victorious, and killed the aforesaid Aubanye, though he was one of the ablest swordsmen—in his special line—and a hundred times better than his adversary.

The latter, needless to say, was severely censured by every one for his complaisance, and for giving such a man so great an advantage, as, if d'Aubanye had taken to killing him, he would have found his hands pretty full.

This little affair took place during the last wars of the League, near Rochelle, both parties being Huguenots and attached to the King of Navarre.

It was some years after the Antraguët duel that the Baron de Biron got up another of three against three. He took for his second and third, Lognat and Genissat, capital brave fellows, against the Sieur. de Carancy, who had with him the no less competent Estissac and La Bastye.

Of course Biron and Carancy were the real principals in the matter—the others simply joining in for the fun of it, and to enjoy themselves, as they were friends on good speaking terms before.

They all went off to fight (a fact dimly significant of the growing force of law) *quite* “*quietly*,” as we say (*sans faire nul bruit*), a league out of Paris,¹ and

¹ Between Montrouge and Vangirard, March 8, 1586 (l'Estoile).

right in the country (*dans les beaux champs*), so as not to annoy the King, who was in his capital, and had developed a disapproval of these affairs.

It was early in the morning when they went out. It was snowing very hard, but they did not mind the bad weather, and kept the whole matter so private that not a soul saw the beginning or end of the fight except a few poor people passing by.

M. de Biron was so extremely fortunate that he and his friends each finished off their man and stretched him dead on the ground. Some say that Biron, who was particularly handy and prompt with his weapon (you know that in all arts, not only that of war, some people *are* much handier and quicker than others): very well, then, they say that he, having disposed of his own antagonist before any one else, went and helped his friends—and quite right too, showing that he had not only bravery but foresight and valour, young as he was, for he had not yet done the feats of arms which have since distinguished him as one of the bravest soldiers in Christendom—"as I describe him in the book I wrote on Famous French and Spanish Captains."

It was this foresight that taught him not to trust in the "God Mars," the most unreliable and uncertain of all Deities. Be over-confident one day, make no use of the advantage he gives you—then see if he doesn't take it away next time—yes, and make you pay dear for your folly! Just as it might have gone very ill with the Baron or his friends if he had simply let them alone and looked on, and not gone to their assistance. But he was much too brave a man to do the thing by halves, and simply take the fun of it. And so for that matter ought every brave heart to back up his comrades to the last drop of his blood, *unless* the duel is one with special terms.

It was so in that case of the Spaniards and the French, where the agreement was that any combatant who was put outside the lists should be considered conquered and a prisoner, and not be allowed to fight any more that day. Similarly any champion who was unhorsed was not to fight any more ; and if one company did not succeed in beating the other before nightfall, or even if there was a single man left on horseback, the affair should be over, with honours divided, and he could bring off all his companions scot free with as much credit as the others.

Precious singular conditions those—quite in the Spanish style of subtlety and caution—not to say a trifle comic, reminding one of the game of prisoner's base, in which one fellow recovers his comrades when taken ; and rather a severe trial to be bound *not* to succour your friends in distress. However, there was the law. Where it is not so of course you would cut in where you could—or be a disgraced man.

What might be called a miraculous contest of three at once—which perhaps the reader will hardly believe—was that which Brantome had heard of at Naples—heard it from one gentleman of the highest honour and veracity about another of the same kidney.

One may mention in passing that scarcely one of the characters in Brantome's Stories have any vice or failing, but a little pride of the "high-handed" order.

The principal actor had been called to account for some light words he was said to have used, so he went off to fight all alone, simply on the word of the second, who had invited him and another in whom he had perfect confidence as a gentleman and a soldier.

Arrived on the spot, he proceeded to despatch his enemy, and was quietly leaving the ground, when the second came up and expressed himself aggrieved at what had happened. He was afraid people might

reproach him afterwards if he did nothing to avenge the death of his comrade by fighting the man who had killed him.

"Oh, if that is all," says the Neapolitan, as cool as cucumber, "most happy, I'm sure" (*ne tient il qu' à cela? Vrayement je le veux*), and crossing swords, polished him off too. Then up comes the third, quite as brave as the others, who had watched it all.

"Well," says he, "you have won a fine victory, and no mistake. And if you weren't so tired, as I observe, after fighting two men one after the other, I should have liked to relieve you of half your honours. Yes, sir, I challenge you to fight, but seeing your condition, let us put it off till to-morrow, when I will expect to find you on the same spot at the same hour; and be sure I won't be behindhand while my poor dead comrades call for vengeance."

"Tired?" was the answer—"not a bit of it" (*Riens moins que cela*); "much better fight now whilst I'm warm than wait till to-morrow, thanks. I'm feeling as fresh as if I had done nothing, so let's have done with these ceremonies" (*passons-en nos fantaisies*) "and fight now." And he did with him just as with the other two, and went home safe and sound, leaving materials for a goodly funeral behind him.

That you might truly call a marvellous affair such as one would not read of in the Chronicles of the Knights-Errent; besides, they are inventions, and this, if it is true, is a glorious feat—"all the more wonderful that it is quite credible."

And of course there are numerous points to be noted about it for the reader's instruction, points which we modestly leave to others to discuss—when we have quite done with them.

First and foremost, it required some nerve to go and

fight, relying entirely upon the honour of a stranger and without a second of your own.

Secondly, this is even more remarkable in a man who undertakes to fight three men—"one down, another come on"—a thing which by all the laws ever heard of you could not be bound to do if you liked to put the combats off a day or two.

Lastly, the Neapolitan certainly had prodigious luck—such as one never heard of. However—"I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

In the time of the late Charles IX. there was a combat in the Isle du Palais between a Norman gentleman, "whose name I can't remember" and a little man named Reffuge, one of the smallest men our author had ever seen.

The place, as has been said, was on the island, and just as they were about to cross—by themselves and without any seconds—they saw a lot of gentlemen making for the quay to get boats and come and separate them, for it was the time when the King went to hear Mass in the Bourbon chapel.

But they said to the boatman—they were both in one boat—(such the old-fashioned valour of our modern champions)¹ to look sharp and get them across, as they were on urgent business, and each gave the boatman a bit of silver.

As soon as they touched shore they said to each other no more than "Let us get to work. These people will be here in a minute." And so they did—scarcely crossing swords before each man killed the

¹ "*Quai bonta y valor di nostri Cavalieri come de gli Antiqui*"—a singular jumble of Italian and Spanish! of which latter language, however, Brantome had a considerable knowledge.

other ; and here they were found—dying, side by side as they fell !

“ What enthusiasm ! ” says Brantome ; “ what passion ! ”

M. le Marquis de Malleraye,¹ eldest son of M. de Pienne, when he was first back from Italy, a handsome youth and well skilled with arms, came to a ball at the Court one night and picked a quarrel with the Seigneur de Livarot (one of the six who fought in the combat of Quelus and Antraguët),² whether for any particular reason Brantome could not say, but perhaps merely to settle an account with the man who was something of a turbulent bully ever since his success in that duel aforesaid. In this character he had taken for his mistress a lady of the Court—and a fair one—and would have none pay her any attention but himself, being jealous of her beauty, her honour, and her possessions. The Marquis, a fine brave youth, ventured to flout this interdict in Livarot's presence. The other, haughty as ever, at first took him up with a word or two, and then—well, “ dry straw takes fire easily.” In a word, they agreed—quietly—to have it out on a little island in the river near Blois, without seconds or anything.

On the morning, then, each duly appeared on a stout charger ready for the fray—with no attendants but a lacquey apiece to hold their horses.

Well, in “ two twos ” the Marquis ran his man right through the body with a clean thrust—which Brantome tells us “ I could show you more easily than I could

¹ We should read *Maignelais*. He was then twenty-four years old. The combat took place on May 5, 1581 (H. de P.).

² See page 98.

describe, for *he had explained it to me before*”—and stretched him dead.

But—here is the dreadful part of the story—as he was coming back, Livarot’s lacquey, a big, strong fellow, “already wearing a sword,” which he had hidden an hour before in the sand (some say it was his own idea—some that it was his master’s bidding, though that is difficult to believe of so brave a man), came behind and stabbed the young fellow in the back, so that he never breathed again but to exclaim (as the rascal struck him), “My God, what’s this?” The lacquey, of course, was taken, on the evidence of some who saw the deed, and promptly hanged, having confessed everything, and said that he did it to avenge his master.

The obvious moral is that if they had had seconds, such a thing could never have happened, and that you always should have them, both in order to avoid rascally treachery and to witness the conduct—gallant or cowardly—of their principals.

That is to say, of course, if those persons are not all the time engaged in fighting among themselves, like some we have read of—a practice bound to interfere with their utility as seconds. Otherwise one may accept the general rule without waiting for all the other reasons which are “too long to detail.”

It is like doing business without a proper solicitor, though some people may think it less trouble. All kinds of “inconveniences” are likely to arise.

Here is one for example—a case that happened in the time of the last Pope Gregory¹ when two

¹ Gregory XIII., ob. 1585.

French gentlemen, La Villatte, and the Baron de Saligny fought against Matecolon and Esparezat, favourites of the King. They chose a spot four miles out of Rome, and Esparezat, the "author of the quarrel," was engaged with Villatte, while his second fought the Baron de Saligny, the couples being placed some thirty paces apart. After the proper ceremonies, it chanced Matecolon was the first to kill his man, and observing that Esparezat, his second, was a long time in settling *his*, though he was quite a youth (that was what Francesco, the fencing professor, said—"that they were both boys," Saligny as well as Villatte), came up to help him, and they finished off the latter together, and not without some trouble, though the youth did complain that "two against one was not fair." "How can I tell," said Matecolon, that when you've killed Esparezat you won't come and kill me, if you can, or give me more to do, when I've as much as I can see my way out of already?"

In that combat, you see, the seconds behaved quite differently to the four Florentines in the famous case already described, and of course there is a great difference between a formal combat with solemn conditions enforced by umpires, and keepers of the lists and seconds, and one which is conducted on the sly (*à l'escart*) in the fields where it is all hard fighting.

Some time ago for example, there was a duel fought in Limousin between a gentleman called Romefort and one Fredaigues, both hangers-on of the House of Vauguion; and another of the parties was a fellow who was afterwards killed at Court. He had got the name of a gallant somehow, though he had seen very little warfare. No need to mention his name.

Well, he went, as Romefort's representative, and

challenged Fredaigues, who, relying on his honour, promptly appeared at the rendezvous without a second, except that the parties had a groom apiece to hold their horses.

Romefort's friend had disguised himself in this character (as *palefrenier*), the design being to get rid of Fredaigues and make sure of killing him. However, as luck would have it, the latter despatched his opponent so promptly that the pretended groom had no chance of cutting in to his assistance, especially as the horses had been left some distance away. Then as Fredaigues' own groom came quickly up with his master's steed, he mounted with all celerity and charged at the other (whom he recognised at once) with such fury that he simply turned tail and bolted to the nearest high ground, Fredaigues commending him heartily to the devil as he ran away.

Then he returned victorious, saying he had killed his enemy and driven his groom off the ground.

"Such was no doubt the Divine will," to punish an audacious bit of treachery.

Fredaigues, by the way, was himself killed afterwards, together with the Comte de la Rochefaucauld, at the siege of St. Yriers (1591) in Limousin.

Apropos of treachery, the gallant Vicomte of Touraine, when challenged by M. de Duras (for his brother M. de Rozan), after he had gone out as willingly as possible, complained grievously of what was practised on him, as whilst he was engaged, four or five fellows rushed at him out of an ambuscade and gave him ten or a dozen sword cuts. They were not, however, practised hands (not to be compared with the Baron de Vitaux, of whom we are to be told more presently), and left him there for dead. For this he

naturally wished to be revenged against Duras, so formed a design to kill him in his house—trickery or no trickery, as he had himself been treated. And, in fact, no doubt he (Touraine) would have been killed, but for the singular accident that a savage buck that was in the dyke there charged so ferociously at the assassins that they took fright, and abandoning their enterprise, ran away.

M. de Duras, it must be said, was full of apologies, and swore he had nothing to do with the outrage, and that, for that matter, six men against one must have killed their man if they had meant to. He himself, as a brave and honourable man, was not likely to have anything to do with such a plot, and would have died first. If others intruded into his affairs he was not responsible. Brantome had heard him vigorously deny it.

But in all these cases of combats by challenge, the opinion of the best authorities was that you should think twice or three times before going out on implicit reliance on the safe conduct of other gentlemen.

You ought to be well assured as to the kind of people they were, and their rank, position, honour, credit, and previous reputation, taking example from M. de Rosne, of Lorraine, who fought in the wars of France and Flanders, as well as for the League, with the Guises and the Spaniards. For when he had a difference with the young Rambouillet, M. de Fargy, and was challenged "by a certain gentleman I know, but shall not name," and received an assurance of safety from him "on his word and his honour" that he would be safe in coming to meet Fargy, he simply answered that he "was not so sure about it" (*il y falloit adviser*), and as to trusting his life to M. So-and-So's word of honour, he wouldn't lend twenty crowns upon it!

The fact is it is best to be on the safe side in such

matters, always provided that one's honour isn't endangered, and that no one can think one's motive is to avoid fighting.

Not long ago the Baron de Vitaux received a challenge and defiance from Millaud to meet him right out in the country, a league away from Paris.

No need to ask if he was there, being one of the bravest men on earth, as he has shown often enough.

It was agreed between the two that their seconds should *not* fight—they too were gallant fellows, and very good friends.

The Baron's representative then examined Millaud, and Millaud's the Baron, to see they had only the proper arms. Some of the supporters (and their women-folk) say that the latter was taken in, as the combatants were to fight in their shirts alone, and when he came to inspect Millaud and "feel" him, he (Millaud) threw open the front of his shirt—over the breast—as who should say, like some traveller at a *douane*, "Nothing there, you see," so that the official retired satisfied, *believing that he showed his naked body*.

The gist of their accusation is that the said Millaud was really wearing a fine steel cuirass painted to look so like real flesh that the second was completely deceived. So people said.

But no one could be less censorious than Brantome, or more reluctant to judge an erring and embarrassed fellow-being. He would like, he tells us, to have the opinion of a first-rate artist as to whether a cuirass could be so painted. Having got that, he would respectfully refer us once more to those learned "authorities on duelling" who seem, alas! to have discoursed so much and decided so little!

It was certainly a suspicious fact that the Baron's

sword was found blunted at the end. Fronting his enemy, it seems he began with a couple of rapid thrusts which had no material effect except to cause him to retire a pace or two ; so then he tried a cut or two, but Millaud parried them, and waiting on him, came on with a fierce thrust which brought him to earth ; then drawing close up, gave him a series of stabs in the body, which finished him, without offering any courtesy or quarter at all.

We must remember that the Baron had killed his (Millaud's) father in the same way : though for that matter Millaud had killed Vitaux's brother, the Baron de Tiers.

In the atmosphere to which we are now coming—a subordinate and, as it were, domestic species of duelling—genealogy plays quite an important part. The question what persons you ought to kill and how you should kill them depended largely on their relations with your deceased relatives.

So, in any case, fell the gallant Baron Vitaux, after a long career of victories over his enemies (though some, as we shall see, succeeded in surviving him)—so fell this redoubtable swordsman by the hand of a youth who had scarcely any experience, you might say, to speak of, but coming straight out of prison in Germany, where he had been detained as a hostage, went straight off to encounter one of the most desperate warriors in France.

That was what people felt at the time about the event, and the good luck of one and the ill-fortune of the other. It was a fine beginning for young Millaud, and a wretched and disastrous end for the Baron, but not a whit dishonourable—quite the reverse.

Brantome knew all about it, for he had the whole story from Jacques Ferron, of Ast, the fencing-master, who had been in his employ and had taught Millaud.



22

COMBATANT ENTERING THE LISTS.

From Pistofilo : *Torneo*, 1626.



113

CARRIAGE OF SWORD WHEN RETREATING.

[To face p. 112.

He was afterwards killed at Ste. Basille, in Gascony, while serving as engineer there when M. de Mayne besieged it.

Most unluckily, though our author took the special trouble to recommend him to the Baron some three months before, to give him lessons, though he was a very fair fencer, he (the Baron) would not trouble to take them, whereas Millaud did, and was much the better for it.

Well, Master Jacques told him that he had climbed up into a nut-tree some way off to see this, the Vitaux-Millaud duel, and he never in his whole life saw any man make a braver show or come into position with a more confident and determined air.

Starting fifty paces off his adversary, he strode towards him fiercely twirling his moustache with one hand ; then at twenty paces off (no further) he put his right hand to his sword, which he was carrying in his left, though he had not drawn it, and as he came forward gave it a shake which sent the sheath flying through the air, *which is the thing to do (le beau de cela)*, and shows the proper sort of coolness and confidence, unlike those gentry Brantome had seen, who began drawing their swords five hundred yards off the enemy, or even the best part of a mile, some of them !

Well—so perished this Baron bold, the paragon of France, as he was called, noted as the fiercest and most remorseless of men in the matter of revenge.

For this amiable quality he was of high repute, not only in France, but in Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland, and England—a man whom foreigners asked to be shown when they came into the country (as the author knew for a fact, and we don't wonder at it), so widespread was his renown. He was small in stature, but great in spirit.

People said—what will not censorious people say ?—

"that he killed his men unfairly; in fact, by unscrupulous treachery."

Brantome can only tell us—with excusable impatience—that he had it from the best captains in Italy, the professors, one may say, of the Vendetta, that their principle was: when you had to kill a man *in ogni modo*, "anyhow," as one would kill a rat, that treachery could only be repaid in similar coin, and that there was no dishonour about the matter at all.

Allowances had to be made for a gentleman with so much business upon his hands that he could scarcely attend to formalities.

The heroic De Vitaux, if the reader wants to hear his story, began by killing the Baron de Soupez at Toulouse.

De Soupez was a fine and gallant youth, but a trifle over-confident, a fault which Brantome had taken the liberty of trying to correct that time when they went to the relief of Malta together. He had such a contempt for Vitaux that one day at supper, when they had a few words, he threw a candlestick at his head.

Vitaux's hand was on his sword, and he would have had his revenge on the spot, but was prevented by the friends of Soupez (who, as it chanced, were there in stronger force than those of the other baron), and was compelled to leave the house; but an hour later, way-laying young Soupez as he came out, he killed him in no time, and left him dead on the pavement.

Herein he ran considerable risk, and, if taken, would doubtless have been hanged, not only on account of the severity of the authorities at Toulouse, but because his victim had a great many friends and relatives in the town. However, he escaped all right, disguised as a girl—it would make a long story—and went straight

to the house of M. de Duras, a kindly and hospitable gentleman, who received him with every courtesy, though they were not on intimate terms, and lent him horses to bring him on to Brantome's. There he stayed a fortnight, and was furnished with horses and money (duly repaid afterwards) to get off to Paris—if the reader will excuse the mention of such trivial matters; but the apology is quite unnecessary.

It was after a decent pause (*au bout de quelque temps*) that Vitaux paid attention to his next man, a young Gounelieu who had just come from the King at Blois—he was a great favourite and in charge of the Royal stables—and just then on his way home to Picardy, posting with four horses. The Baron, being well informed of his movements, followed him with only a couple of good horses—he had only young Boucicaut with him—caught him up in the plain of St. Denis, and finished him off there and then. The King was simply mad with rage, fond of Gounelieu as he was; and there again Vitaux would have been executed sure enough if he had been caught, but he discreetly retired into Italy, and lay low till he was ready for his next enterprise, the Millaud affair.

It should be explained, perhaps, that his motive for killing Gounelieu was that the latter had killed his young brother, a boy of about fifteen, and by some foul play, which was hard upon a youth of so much promise. Both were in the service of M. d'Alençon. In such fashion then—and no one can deny its effectiveness—did Vitaux avenge his young brother's death.

Then he had to turn his attention to Millaud, who, as he learnt, had since the siege of Rochelle (1573) been strolling about Paris at his ease, fully believing him to be miles away in Italy, and quite convinced that he would never have the audacity to return to the

capital and brave the King's anger. The Baron, however, was back already, and on his victim's trail, promenading the streets, dressed up as an advocate. He had let his beard grow so as to be quite unrecognisable, and lodged for a fortnight in that little house at the end of the Quai des Augustins "where he used to see Millaud go by ever so many times—as he told me afterwards."

Then, watching what he thought a good opportunity, he went out accompanied only by the two Boucicaut brothers. (They hailed from Provence, and were no cowards either—people used to call them "Vitaux's lions.") They attacked Millaud right in front of his own lodging, and though he had five or six fellows there, killed him with little difficulty, and got off clear into the country.

As ill-luck would have it, in killing Millaud, one of his sword cuts accidentally wounded one of the Boucicauts in the leg, which caused him great loss of blood, as they were making their escape, and he had to stop at some little place and have it attended to by the village barber. The consequence was that, being pursued by the Provost Franchon, he was taken about twelve leagues out of Paris, not too easily either—he was severely wounded first—and brought back to Paris and imprisoned in the Four-l'Eveque, and in such danger that, "every day we expected to hear of his execution."

Brantome himself paid the promising young gentleman two visits in prison, and found him expecting nothing but instant death, and not the least disturbed by the idea, he said, *now that he had avenged his two brothers*—Millaud, by the way, had killed his other brother the Baron de Tiers—and again, not without suspicion of treachery; but the story is too long, and would be out of place here. There he lay, then, on

the very “eve” of execution, the King—and the King of Poland¹—both clamouring for his death. But the Provost of Paris², his brother, with whom the chief of the Polish Ambassadors were then staying, had the happy thought of asking them to intercede for his brother and beg the two kings to spare his life, which they did. Who would not like to have heard the “passionate and eloquent oration in Latin” delivered in such a cause and at such short notice?

Brantome, of course, was there, and he notes that the King was only moved with great difficulty, and at first would merely hold out hopes of a reprieve. What inclined the balance was apparently the argument brought forward by De Thou,³ the first President and a great friend of the prisoner’s, who defended his cause on retrospective grounds which might surprise a modern lawyer.

“If Gounelieu and Millaud, the murderers of his (*Boucicaut’s*) brothers had been executed, then, incontestably, he ought to share their fate. But as His Majesty had not insisted on that—well, the law must be the same for all, and he must be pardoned like the others.”

And at last, by judicious delays, prayers, and solicitations, his trial was suspended. That was when the King of Poland—the principal prosecutor, so to speak—was just starting on his journey. So they tried the young man off-hand, and he was duly pardoned and absolved, and there one saw him, gallivanting about the

¹ Charles IX. (1562-74) and Henry III., who, in that year, was elected King of the Poles. But after a few months’ experience of that singular mechanism, the Polish Constitution, he fled back to France, pursued by his would-be subjects.

² Antoine Du Prat, Prévoit de Paris, 1553.

³ Christophe de Thou (1508-1582), first President of the Parliament of Paris. *Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*

court and the streets of Paris, in high feather and the admiration of all beholders.

When the king came back from Poland, the Baron went and paid his respects : but M. Du Gua, a great favourite of the King's and an intimate of the deceased Millaud, declared himself his mortal enemy, and, with contemptuous words, swore to settle accounts with him some day.

Both parties were great friends of Brantome, and he, having the Baron's word for it, tried to reconcile them ; but no, Du Gua would not hear of it, and defied him to the death.

And once he (Vitaux) was on the point of sending him a challenge, but desisted for reasons which are not to be revealed ; besides, that was not his wisest or safest method of procedure. So when he heard that one was "brewing," on Du Gua's side, he left Paris and the Court.

Six months later he turned up one evening at Du Gua's lodging, where he was in bed, left two of his men to guard the door, slipped upstairs, and went for him. Du Gua, at sight of the Baron, jumped out of the window into the gutter and caught up a pole to defend himself with. Vitaux was after him in a jiffy, and with two or three thrusts from a rather broad "cutting" sword (*which, by the way, is more handy for such purposes than a long one*) left him there for dead, though he survived an hour or two, saying some confidant had betrayed him. This little affair despatched, the Baron succeeded in getting off the premises so adroitly that no one had a notion or more than a conjecture who the murderer was. So quietly was the whole affair managed that it was never brought home to him ; and he never even avowed it in so many words to his intimate friend—our author !

Such was the end of M. Du Gua, a brave and

generous gentleman, the chronicle of whose deeds is written in our little Book of Colonels in France from the first institution of that office.¹

Such was his end, killed in the middle of his company of guards, among all his own officers and soldiers, and hardly fifty paces out of sight of a monarch who was particularly devoted to him—*without any one knowing anything of it*—a thing which was indeed a nine days' wonder at Court.

"In conclusion," the Baron in question did deserve his reputation as the most remorseless of sleuth-hounds in the matter of private vengeance.

Whether (in addition to the above ghastly tale) he was also responsible for the murder of the young Montraveau, brother of M. Clermont d'Amboise, it was really difficult to say in the absence of better evidence; especially as it happened somewhere in the woods or warrens of Nantouillet, and the two families (presumably of Nantouillet and Montraveau) had not been on very good terms for some time past.

On such a matter there was no certainty, but Brantome knew for a fact that there were *two other men he meant to kill*, who may have heard, without regret, of his decease.

Some of his enemies (possibly these two among them) never did approve his particular "way of killing" people. They said he was not given to challenging you openly, and they would like to know why not. Well, that peculiarity has been discussed already. And anyhow at his death he showed clearly enough that he was ready for any kind of fight—orthodox or irregular and domestic. Brantome had known him, for that matter, both send and accept challenges like

¹ This, like the short history of "Mestres du Camp" forms a chapter in Brantome's *Hommes Ill, et Grands Capitaines*.

other people ; in fact, he never refused anybody, and there could be no question of his personal bravery, for any other sort of man could never have done the deeds he did—and would have done, but for his death.

Perhaps that is enough about him—a man whom one could easily immortalize (if that has not been done already) as much for his merits as for the warm friendship subsisting between him and the author—"fifteen years ago"—a friendship cherished by every kind of mutual service between brothers and allies, as they called themselves.

"I heard of his death the next day at Estampes, as I was travelling by post from my own home"—and if he (Brantome) had only got there a little sooner, he would have advised him not to meet his man "in the country"—when people were so set on getting him out of the way and that by any mortal means.

It is a mild consolation to reflect that, even if he had got off scot free from the *duel*, he would have fallen in an ambuscade which, as one heard later, was on the look-out for him.

For, to take the reader completely into our confidence, "he was beginning to be more feared than liked by certain great people and—ahem!—*great ladies*," so that under the circumstances this assassination of Du Gua was regarded as an amazing display of determination and self-confidence.

Such was our friend the Baron, the typical "Chevalier" of his age : though it must not be supposed he had no equals or worthy associates.

One "no whit behind him" was the late Comte de Martinengo—a side-sprig, they said, of that gallant and noble family, but worth any two of the true blood, and no reflection on them either.

He had a difference with a gentleman of Brescia of an important family thereabouts, and after stalking and hunting him for ever so long in the fields, determined to track him up to his lair in the city. So, taking two stout soldiers with him, he went into the city at full mid-day, entered his house, stepped up to his room, and killed him in a trice, went downstairs again, and out of the house (for it is nothing to effect your murder unless you also get off clear) by the same door; and he and his friends were on their good steeds again, which were waiting for them, and a league out of the city before any alarm was raised.

Then there was a hue and cry. Officers of justice and relatives—grand seigneurs among them—rode and ran after the gallant Count, but they took nothing by it. Martinengo got safe over the border into Piedmont, where he took service with King Henry II., whom he served so loyally all his lifetime as to be reckoned among his most faithful servants, French or foreign.

That was not all. For "when we were at the siege of Malta" the Comte de Martinengo turned up there just for the fun of the thing, and as if he had been a youth who had never seen war. As to that he used to say that the finest death possible was to die for the cause of God and religion, and that in that he wished to imitate his worthy ancestor, who in the same spirit had gone to help the besieged garrison at Rhodes, and taken with him at his own cost two hundred men-at-arms—aye, and fought so well and gallantly that the written account of the siege says that the place held out two months longer than it would have done but for his coming.

So one might read in the book—one "not easily procurable" (*qui ne se recouvre aysement*), as second-hand

booksellers say of their treasures—*Brantome had a copy*—but extremely interesting and full of curious details of the siege.

To return to our friend the Count, who would come to Malta, as has been said, although all his friends tried to dissuade him from going, as it was so likely he would meet some other of his enemies, friends of the man he had killed, lying wait for him in some part of Italy. But he was as determined to go on the expedition as if he had never given any one cause for hostility at all, saying that as for killing, if they tried it, that was a game two could play at.

So he came, by way of Piedmont, like the rest of us, and so to Pavia, which is not far from Brescia, and thence to Genoa. You never saw such determination. Then at Genoa he embarked in a small frigate, like all the rest of the party. Finally, after coasting all the way down Italy “we got to Malta, safe and sound, and he seemed to think himself in no danger.”

Similarly on the way back, he came by land, like the others. At Rome he heard there was “a relative of his man” hanging about, and wanted to look him up and kill him—just as one would pay an obligatory “call” on some distant connection—but was dissuaded by friends who urged that he had done enough for the etiquette of the thing in the past.

So he made his way back to France, moving carefully from one city to another, but avoiding Venetian territory; for not having made his peace with the authorities there, he might have been in danger of his life, and it would have been too rash to tempt Providence to such an extent.

The whole journey showed a “determined courage” which the modern traveller will scarcely be able to understand, but such as you might expect of a man

who fought so well "in all our wars, foreign and civil, on this side of the Alps and on that."

He gave a tolerable exhibition of nerve, too, in the duel he fought on the bridge at Pau, in Piedmont, against an Italian, each combatant having a couple of daggers, one in each hand. It is true that the left arm right up to the shoulder was covered with that species of "long, stiff armguard, made all in one piece," of which we have heard before.¹

His enemy selected it, because, "like my late uncle Chastaigneraye," he had been wounded in the arm, and wished to neutralise that limb accordingly.

Martinengo was victorious, killing his enemy on the spot—after a furious encounter—so spectators said, among others the late M. de Vassé, who was the Count's second. They did not observe many of the ceremonies used at combats in the lists; in fact, it would rather be classed as one of the combats *à la mazza* (with a challenge) than anything else.

That, however, is neither here nor there. The point is that it was a fine fight, and added a good deal to the reputation of Martinengo. Not that he was the least disposed to be vain either of that or of any other of his deeds of valour, for he was one of the kindest and least assuming of men, and a thoroughly good friend where he meant to be, as Brantome could testify from personal experience.

In a word, the fame of his valour was so widespread that when war broke out between the Venetians and the Turks they sent straight off to him one day at Paris (where he was usually to be found, or at Court, when there was no fighting going on) offering a general pardon and amnesty for all the past, and a commission with unlimited credit, to raise 3,000 men

¹ Account of the Jarnac-Chastaigneraye duel, p. 60.

and act as their colonel, which he did at once and without much trouble, as the third Civil War¹ had just come to an end and peace had been made, and he was very popular with the soldiery and looked after them well. So in less than no time he got together the men, even more than were ordered, and off he went to Venice, where he was well received, not to say idolised, and marched into Dalmatia with his brave Frenchmen and a sprinkling of Italians, and carried on the campaign effectively till peace was made—a peace negotiated at the solicitation of the King by his great Ambassador, M. de Dax. Then returning into France, where the Civil War was aflame again, he died at the siege of La Charité, where he served as Maitre-de-Camp of twelve companies of foot, and a great pity it was, for he was a brave and honourable man. “I speak of him elsewhere in my book on Colonels.”²

There for the moment is enough of murderous combats, though we might easily be supplied with a hundred other cases. Brantome would like to tell us of some nice things in the way of courtesy practised in the days of King Francis.

Once when His Majesty sent that special favourite the Cardinal of Lorraine into Flanders to solemnly ratify some treaty or other with the Emperor (Charles V.) there was among the nobles in the Cardinal's train a spirited young Breton called De Sourdeval, who had been Governor of Bellisle a long time, till King Charles deprived him of it in favour of Marshal de Retz.

Sourdeval had a quarrel with another Frenchman

¹ 1572. In all there were eight “Civil Wars” between 1562 and 1589.

² Among the *Memoirs of “Gallant Captains.”*

whose name one cannot remember, and off they went without a word out of Brussels, where the Imperial Court was in residence.

Sourdeval was so lucky or so handy with his weapon as to disable his adversary altogether, though he was slightly wounded himself.

Then, as he had come on horseback and his enemy on foot, he picked up the defeated man and brought him home with the greatest care on his own charger, holding him up all the time, and took him to a surgeon in the city to have his wound carefully dressed, so that he recovered. Now there are people who would rather die than involve themselves in such a service as that, though really it is nothing to a brave man—in fact, it is the highest form of victory; so much so, that the conquered man, in his turn, would rather have died then and there than accept it: though others say, “*There’s nothing like living*” (*il n’y a que de vivre*) when you have the chance. It was a weighty question.

The Emperor was so pleased, however, with young Sourdeval that he sent for him and praised his conduct before all the Court, and presented him with a gold chain in honour of his gallantry and generosity.

A dreadful blow that to his adversary! Brantome had the story from the deceased M. de Guise, “the Great,” who was there with monsieur his uncle, and from others in the train of the Cardinal. Besides, he had known Sourdeval himself pretty familiarly, and noted his general high reputation at Court, and believed he was still alive.

When Henry II. sent M. Dessé (? d’Oysel) as his Lieut.-General into Scotland with a considerable

force,¹ among the gentlemen in his train was one Dussac, otherwise called Jurignac, and Captain Hautefort, both of Perigord.

They quarrelled about the favour of a fair lady who was there, but whose name need not be revealed. They settled to meet in the Isle of Horses, just in front of Little Leith. "Those who know the spot as I do can tell you where it is." There they repaired and fought all alone, Jurignac being seriously wounded. Hautefort, however, would not finish him off, but let him return in safety and have his wounds dressed.

As soon as he was cured what does he do but challenge Hautefort a second time!—with precisely the same result—and Hautefort showed him again the same indulgence as before, after which they were reconciled to each other, though they never really became friends. There was luck—and generosity—for you!

Jurignac is still alive. Hautefort was killed somewhere in Germany. He, by the way, was a great friend of Brantome's brother, Captain Bourdeille. The two were called a couple of "Piedmont Boasters," like Villenaigre and Thaiz.

Captain Bourdeille fought once against a particular friend of his (if such was the fate of friends we can imagine the terror of enemies!), a man called Cobios.

They fought at Turin, on the bridge over the Pau, and Bourdeille, as luck would have it, wounded Cobios in the hand, so that he had to drop his sword.

¹ To the relief of the town of Leith, then undergoing (1559-60) its famous siege by the "Lords of the Congregation," the leaders of the Protestant party in Scotland, supported by Queen Elizabeth. An English fleet suddenly appeared in the Forth, and soon afterwards the envoys of Francis and Mary agreed to withdraw their forces, and to recognise Elizabeth's title to her throne. The Scotch Parliament at once declared Calvinism the national religion; and the episode dates the close of Scotch dependence on France.

"Pick it up again," said Bourdeille; "I am not in the habit of fighting men without arms." "Not a bit of good, my dear fellow," says Cobios; "I couldn't hold it, my hand is so cut." "Very well," answered the other, "then the combat is over," and took him off by the arm to a surgeon's to have his wound dressed—*putting off the duel till he was cured.*

If this does not exhibit the pure aimless delight in bloodshed for its own sake, what could? It would be no use asking why, if one desired to fence but not to kill—it was impossible to play with the buttons on.

But there was a more remarkable example of chivalrous behaviour given by two other captains of the same country, who being similarly entangled in the meshes of an old friendship, persisted in fighting till one was put *hors de combat*. The other being untouched, observed, "There, that's enough for old friends like us. You'd better go and attend to your wounds," to which the vanquished one replied, "Well, you might as well do a bit more for me. Just pretend to be wounded and wear your arm in a sling for a day or two, so that I needn't be considered disgraced, nor any question of that come up when they want to reconcile us—that is, if I survive."

And the victorious friend "didn't mind if he did," smeared some of the other's blood on his arm, and went about saying he was wounded, but it was a mere nothing, and he only wished his friend were the same.

The latter recovered with some difficulty, and they were afterwards as good friends as before.

On this picturesque episode volumes of commentary, as Brantome sagely remarks, might be written (*il y a*

beaucoup à gloser et à discourir). But he does not venture on the one obvious gloss, that it was much better not to be "great friends" with people to whom sword exercise had become as absolute a necessity of life as golf is to many a modern Briton.

Signs of impatience are indeed to be detected even in this memoir: as when Giannino de Medici (his good qualities we are sure the reader will take as read) could not get his two gallant sons Petro Corso and John of Turin to settle peaceably the little difference which threatened to mar the family happiness. At last, after trying every conceivable means—for he was sure if they met they would kill one another—he was driven to take drastic measures, tore his cloak in two, gave each combatant half of it and a good sword, and shut them up in a room together, swearing they should never come out again till they had settled their difference anyhow they pleased, but once and for all. So they fought. Petro Corso was wounded in the forehead—a mere scratch, but it necessitated his perpetually having to wipe the blood out of his eyes—on which John of Turin insisted on his stopping to bind up the wound, which he did with his handkerchief as well as could be done.

Then they got to work again so vigorously that John was disarmed. Petro, not to be behindhand in courtesy, drew back and said, "Pick up your sword. I'm not going to take you at an advantage."

And for the third time they went at it again.

Then "the spectators" who were looking on—some through the windows, and some through cracks and holes in the door, rushed off to Giannino to implore him to separate the two and reconcile them, or they would simply murder each other, on which he came at once, and entering the hall, found the champions stretched on the floor—one here, one there—help-

less from the severe wounds they had exchanged and their loss of blood.

He had them instantly taken up and attended to with every possible care. Both recovered, and afterwards did good service to France (in the significant phrase of the time) on both sides of the Alps.

This domestic anecdote one had from M. de Cypière, a great friend of the parties.

One need scarcely impress upon the reader that in such a case the *first* act of courtesy is the most creditable and remarkable, for of course, given that, the other man was bound to follow suit ; but whether the "lead" was a right one, that was one of the questions for high authorities.

For instance, if anything had gone wrong afterwards—well, St. Pietro would have been severely blamed for it. And many inclined to think that it would have served him right if John had killed him without more ado, seeing he hadn't the sense to use his victory when he had got it. Nevertheless, let us not forget that courtesy is always praiseworthy, and becoming to a Christian.

So much for earlier precedents. Among the more modern, such as one has seen oneself, at the French Court—well, take that case of the haughty de Bussy¹ and the "word of war" he had with M. de la Ferté when they were in the service of the Prince. The usual ceremonies followed.

¹ L. de Clermont de Bussy d'Amboise, a celebrated fire-eater and duellist of the time, frequently eulogised in these pages. He took a vigorous part in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve (1572), and was afterwards himself assassinated by the Comte de Montsoreau, whose lady he had tried to seduce.

At an early stage in the combat the redoubtable Bussy "got in," and severely wounded his dear friend (need we say they were dear friends?). Then, observing that the poor man was only just able to parry—he made a formal oration (according to Brantome) to the effect that his friend had obviously had enough, that it would be better to defer the rest till he had recovered of his wounds, and Bussy would be happy to escort him to the surgeon's. La Ferté accepted the courtesy—the more readily as he was also a bit lame of one leg from the explosion of a cannon on board M. de Maine's galley, the time he sailed to the Morea, in the company of Don John of Austria, General of the King of Spain. So he was a little indisposed. Not that he did not draw a little blood from Bussy too, and made a good head against him, as indeed he (Bussy) frankly recognised afterwards, and also that he had distinguished himself elsewhere and at the wars. And in that case, too, the incident was a mere momentary interruption of a lifelong friendship.

The Comte de Grand Pré, another of those admirable Crichtons in whose society our author moved, had a difference with the no less distinguished and amiable M. de Givry, Maistre-de-Camp in the King's Light Horse, after the brave M. de Sargonne went over to the League.

Well, nothing particular happened in this combat but that Givry's sword broke in two.

"Take another," said the Count; "mine does not wound at an advantage." But Givry absolutely declined, cheerily replying, "No, no; this bit will do to kill you with."

But De Grand Pré would not press the point seriously, and the duel was brought to a close.

This kind of arrogance, however, was not to be encouraged.

Some years ago there was a duel fought in Auvergne between a gentleman of the country and a certain Scotchman, one Captain Leviston. "I don't know," says Brantome, "if he was of that family of Leviston of which I knew, when I was in Scotland, some good men, and one fine girl, attached to the late Queen of Scots."

The Captain, anyhow, had become possessed of Montagut, in Combraille, and played his cards so well that in two years they say he had made a fortune of one hundred thousand crowns, plundering right and left, and paying little regard for other people's feelings, which, in fact, was the cause of his death. For when the war ended he was challenged by this gentleman aforesaid, though some do say that he became involved first in the capacity of second to some one else.

It really does not matter the least, the point being that he showed a supreme contempt for his opponent, who was, in fact, very far from deserving it.

On the contrary, putting a skilful thrust into the Scotchman's body, he exclaimed: "Leviston, that wasn't bad for first blood. Have you had enough?"

"Before you get in another," was the reply, "I shall have settled you."

"What, you will have it, then? Parry that" (and the point pinked Leviston in the side again); "now you've got what should satisfy you. Go home and have your wounds dressed."

"Never," says the braggart; "my life or yours."

"God's death! You won't be satisfied? Then die you shall in proper form;" and forthwith the gentleman planted two more thrusts in his body, and did finish him in true duelling style.

And we are to consider that he, the victor, did quite right, as the man bragged so, and refused to accept mercy, while on the other hand the victim showed only a proper courage in refusing to put himself under such an obligation.

This, therefore, was the right course for all parties. The unfortunate man of honour had to walk very warily between the Devil and the Deep Sea, the imprudence of not killing, and the disgrace of not being killed.

And even when men did not fight for the pleasure of fighting, they might fight in the interests of peace and humanity !

The first time Brantome was in Italy, passing by Milan, he heard a story of a strange contest that took place, when Antonio Leyva¹ was commanding there for the Emperor Charles.

A certain very famous and gallant Count Claudio was one day out fowling, and having put up a partridge and marked it down in a rather out-of-the-way place, he found four soldiers, bent on fighting one another, in a sheep-pen such as is used for keeping in cattle and manuring the soil. Such was the "lists" these brave fellows had chosen.

The Count, when he saw them all four prepare for combat by stripping to the shirt, begged as a personal favour that they would not fight, but let him adjust their quarrel.

No, they said, they would do nothing of the kind ; but if he liked to amuse himself by looking on and playing umpire they wouldn't mind.

¹ The famous general. He drove Bonniviet out of Milan (1523), was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Forces in Italy (1529), and died 1536.

The Count, however, insisted that it should never be said that he had allowed four men to cut each other's throats in his presence. So he dismounted, and, sword in hand, proceeded to provide a homœopathic remedy for this scandal. They on their part stood together and said, "Let's kill him for a spoil-sport. Then afterwards we can fight each other." That seemed sound reasoning.

And they flung themselves upon the Count. He, however, was so skilled a swordsman, that he soon despatched two of them ; the other two he would have spared, but they attacked him more fiercely than before. The Count kept them off, and presently killed the third. Then, having severely wounded the fourth, but spared his life, he sent a surgeon to attend to his wounds. This particular soldier afterwards recovered and used to tell the story, never concealing the fact that he had been so generously treated. In fact the Count treated him kindly and found employment for him afterwards, and only regretting that he had been compelled to kill the others.

Apropos of the conduct of the particular survivor, some will say that this was all very well for soldiers, but rather beneath a gentleman. However, Brantome has known distinguished soldiers more careful of their private honour than their betters.

The Count was brave, also rather lucky ; for it is to be noted that when people really do "want to fight," or have actually begun, there is nothing so exasperating as the arrival of other disturbing parties on the scene. And the one thing that would bring any pair of duellists into "accord" at once was their readiness to kill any man who tried to separate them and spoil the fun.

But as to asking and accepting your life, there were two examples Brantome had noted. The Signor Troilo Ursino, an Italian gentleman, and one of the pages of honour of the Dauphin (afterwards Francis II.), son of Giordano Ursino, who succeeded M. de Termes as the King's lieutenant in Corsica, fought a duel with Sr. Maigrin in the fields outside Paris.

Ursino was about twenty-five, and had hardly ever been in Paris, leading a gay life in Italy and at Florence, where he afterwards met his death, on account of some love affair.

Well, on arriving in France he quarrelled with Sr. Maigrin over the gaming table, and they exchanged cartels.

Hardly a couple of strokes passed when they closed and wrestled. Sr. Maigrin, the better wrestler and the stronger man, got the other under him, and told him several times he must beg his life. Then, having no arms about him, for they had dropped them in the wrestle, he bethought him of picking a thorn off one of the bushes close by, held it to Ursino's eyes, and threatened to put them both out if he did not surrender.

On which, according to the victor's account, he did.

Troilo it seems, finding that Maigrin was going about boasting of this feat, denied that he had been given his life.

There was a good deal of doubt about the case, and the authorities did not see their way very clearly, even the judges appointed for the reconciliation of the two—which was duly effected.

It did not seem likely that in a sharp wrestle one man would have given the other time to pick a little thing like a thorn.

So the whole affair was "settled"—no one being very sure of the facts. It only shows what a mistake it is,

this fighting in the country, without seconds or any witnesses, where so many stories get wind, you do not know what to believe.

Just the same thing happened with Chantlinaut, a fine fighter, though a bit damaged in one hand. He fought in the Pré-aux-clercs against Bonneval, one of a good Limousin family—the two absolutely alone. Bonneval got a severe wound, and Chantlinaut, seeing he was badly hurt, left him there, coming off without a scratch, while the other had his wounds dressed. Chantlinaut said that he (Bonneval) had begged his life, which he (Chantlinaut) had gladly accorded him.

Bonneval denied it; and, if he had not died shortly after (of this very wound), most probably they would have fought again.

And that, by the way, brings us to the serious question much discussed and disputed—whether a man whose life you have spared *can* claim to fight you again?

Certainly by these venerable Danish and Lombard laws governing formal duels in the lists it was not so. As to the combat *à la mazza* (or “hedgerow free fight”), it was not allowed at Naples, where that kind of combat began, as our author had learnt on the spot.

Besides, in those encounters people fought with such savage fury that in the common form of the thing they were bound to kill each other, or both be left on the ground—as often happens even in France—and there was no question of mercy. The combat was so serious, and the passion or thirst for vengeance so violent, that sometimes both men fell *at one stroke*—as dead as door-nails, as has been described in previous combats.

So, too, it happened that the gallant Sr. de Fourquevaux was killed by Chapelle-Biron, stretched

dead in a couple of thrusts, in the forest of Fontainebleau, where they met,¹ Chapelle coming off safe and sound, thanks to the training he had had from the great Patenostrier in Italy; not that the other was a bad fencer—quite the contrary—besides being a young fellow of great promise. So also Captain Rollet, who was brought up as page to M. de l'Archant, and afterwards Governor of Pont de l'Arche in the Civil Wars, fought at the same place and killed his man, whose name we forget, on the spot.

In these precipitate combats, where death supervenes at once, there is no use, Brantome sagely remarks, talking about life.

But when one of the combatants is still breathing—why then, the oft-rehearsed doctrine applies; though it is nonsense—as the reader must know by this time—to suppose a man disgraced by asking to be spared when he can do no more.

For if, for example, he loses his sword, it is all one whether it breaks in two or he simply drops it, or himself happens to fall—as happened to the Sr. Gouard in his duel with La Chastaigneraye. The tiresome author's generous uncle would not kill the man, but waited for him to get up again; though they were separated immediately afterwards, as the King's Guard happened to be close by.

In the contest between Signor Amadeo, bastard brother of the Duke of Savoy, and Crequi, son-in-law of M. d'Esdiquieres, a further point is illustrated. (The cause does not matter—or rather is so recent that Brantome is sure we must know all about it).²

¹ Claude de Fourquevaux, killed in 1582.

² In fact, it was Filippino, another bastard brother of the Duke's, who was killed. See De Thou, *Hist. de Fr.*, sub anno 1599.

Crequi was lucky enough to disable his opponent, and having forced him to beg for his life, graciously accorded this favour. But the Duke, on hearing of it, was furious, and compelled his unfortunate brother, as soon as his wounds were cured, to go and fight again, to which Crequi assented. They fought on an island in the Rhone, with the usual ceremonies, before a small gallery of spectators watching from the banks of the river. This time Crequi brought his enemy to the ground and killed him without more ado, making, it was held, a judicious use of Divine favour (if it was so) which might have failed him on a third venture. But some people are never satisfied, and the Duke of Savoy, it was said, felt rather hurt at his brother having been killed in a recumbent attitude, though, after himself insisting on the second combat, what else he expected under the given circumstances is not very clear. However, it pleased His Grace to show a marked coldness to M. de Crequi, perhaps simply on the general ground that he had murdered so near a relative.

The moral of all which is that this "sparing" business is all very well the first time, but in the *next* you must positively shut your eyes to every consideration except the extinction of your enemy.

The "*coups d'Espargne*," by the way (which are presumably not *coups* at all), are not to be confused with the *espées de provision*—or (literally) *spare swords*. To avoid the exasperating inconvenience to combatants and spectators of a duel collapsing for want of weapons—and of course, as has been explained, you may fight with all kinds—pike, halberd, lance, &c., &c., besides the sword the most honourable of all—it was not unusual to bring in *four*, two for the duellists to start with, and two for the judges to keep in reserve.

Then if one man broke his blade, or both did, there

was an armistice, and fresh weapons were distributed—of course assuming that was part of the conditions agreed upon ; it being distinctly understood that they must fight it out then without asking any further supply ; and the extra swords would be called “the new and fanciful French of our day,” *Espées ou secours de réserve.*”

Thus in the Chastaigneraye duel, so often alluded to though never fully described, four swords were brought in ; so that the spectators at first fancied the combat would be fought with “one in each hand.” However, it was made clear they were only a reserve in case of accidents, with the condition aforesaid that, whatever happened, neither party was to have any more.

Otherwise one does not see why duels should not have occupied, in many cases, the whole working day, though Brantome’s only deduction is that it all shows how right Créqui was to stop at the second course, without attempting a third !

Sure enough there were many puzzling and complex accidents and incidents in these combats, when all the marshals, judges, and famous captains in the world could hardly say whether a man had had his life conceded to him or not, or whether a second combat ought to be ordered. And all kinds of ingenious formalities were devised to reconcile people, and bring these complex contentions to a satisfactory close.

Incidentally we may recognise the principle well known to other judicial methods, that a cause, once decided (when a duel had been fought and one party had had his life spared) *could not be brought up again.*

Of course it was absurd to suppose a gallant swordsman could have his hands tied for the rest of time. No, but if he was still bent on fighting, he must

positively find some new offence in his enemy's conduct—usually, one may infer, a matter of very little difficulty—and then, of course, it was all right, indeed a bounden duty in defence of your honour.

Thus a familiar example was that of young Captain Castelnau, of Languedoc (Brantome knew his four brothers), and Captain Dalon, of Xaintonge. They had a quarrel in the camp of the Marshal de Biron, who formally settled it for them. But directly afterwards they found a new subject of quarrel and went off and killed one another—a great pity ! There was animosity for you ! Though some people attribute their action, too, to the wondrous force known as *gayète de cœur*—saying they agreed beforehand to amuse the Marshal by a “reconciliation” and then proceed to business !

Of course if the parties would insist on doing this there was no stopping them ; but once more, it was a risky thing, like (very like) the audacious mariner who escapes from one wreck and then puts to sea again to find himself “thoroughly drowned” (*très bien noyé*) next time, and serve him right too !

Nor again—to pass to another point—should the victor make too great parade even of his gratitude for a victory won, so as to throw contempt on his opponent ; that was a simple profanation of the mercies vouchsafed to him ! For instance, to make a triumphant display of his arms or horses to everybody, or hang them up (the arms we presume) in a church, by way of a trophy or offering to the Deity (who is really very indifferent to such things—*ne se soucie guères*), this is most injudicious.

True, it was common enough in classic times, when arms were hung up in the temples of Mars and Neptune, and it was sacrilege to take them down

again. That was long ago. Also, there was one gentleman (unnamed) who wanted to do this "in a well-known church in this kingdom," but he was dissuaded by judicious advisers: otherwise there is not a shadow of doubt he would have been killed in two days. *The other man had too many friends and relations.* Besides, one ought to be modestly thankful for Divine mercies. "I speak now as a Christian, and a good Christian should do so," &c., &c., &c.—reflections which seem somewhat of an afterthought. It would be difficult to say which is the more tiresome, Brantome's jaded cant about Christianity or his *fade* and insipid classicisms concerning the god Mars.

But if you were not to be too haughty, neither, on the other hand, should you be too humble, nor expect your opponent to be. For example, to say in fewer words, "Now yield thee, or by Him who made this world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade," like Fitzjames, might merely provoke the haughty retort of Roderick Dhu.

You might say, "I should be sorry to kill you," without giving unnecessary offence, but such a phrase as "Surrender or die" was too hard a formula for a brave man to stomach. Very likely he would "rather die a hundred deaths" than utter the humiliating word.

It was really better to be kind and courteous and polite, for a variety of excellent reasons, and then leave it to the other man to recognise that you had so behaved. If rightly constituted, he could never wish to fight his benefactor, his "second father"; that is, when his life had been fairly granted. It was another thing when your antagonist began upon you without crying "Guard!" or put you at a disadvantage by some abominable trick.

There was a man who did that, and boasted of it

afterwards. It did him no good. He was paid in kind. For that matter, when you rose from your sick-bed, you might, omitting all ceremony of challenge, go and do likewise to him—"yes, even with a cannon if you could get it there."

When the matter *is* settled, again, by the proper authorities, it is to be regarded as done with. If the conquered man finds that any third party makes unpleasant allusion to his defeat—well, he must have it out with him, for it is better even to be conquered *once* (by the slanderer, that is) than a second time by his original adversary. Perhaps.

But the judges should finally settle the matter in proper form, as was done in the case of the two Breton combatants, De Querman and Frontenay. The thing was done with full ceremony in the Royal antechamber. M. de Margues took both parties by the hand and cried aloud in the presence of some two hundred gentlemen there assembled, "Messieurs, His Majesty bids me have you to know that he has reconciled these two gentlemen with equal honour, that there is no more to be said on either side, and that he who denies that both are men of unblemished honour and valour, he lies."

"Well," some jokers remarked, "one couldn't very well fight the King on the point of veracity!"

However the maxim was. There was no more to be said—"Quand le Roy y a passé le ballais"; *Anglicè*, "The Royal broom sweeps clean."

It was questioned, no doubt, by some people, whether a man's "honour" could very well be regulated by any kind of Royal edict—opinions varied; but the modern reader will recollect with interest that the practice of duelling in our own times was, in fact, put an end to by an order from that mysterious fount of honour and rectitude—"the Horse Guards." To

return to Brantome: kings and emperors might legislate on other matters, but hardly, it was urged, upon so sacred and personal a matter as this.

In that *fracas* in the ball-room at Fontainebleau between the young Seigneur de Genlys and M. de Mareuil in the time of Henry II., Montberon, fourth son of the Constable, would not let the two go out but insisted on reconciling them at once, requesting that they would entrust their difference and their honour to him. "My honour," said Mareuil, a veteran swordsman, adding the favourite oath of the period—"why, there is no man to whom I would sooner trust it than your father, one of the bravest warriors in Christendom."

And not only the Constable, but M. de Guise¹ and other great men, gave their solemn approval to this reflection.

In all such matters there was nothing like having the opinion of your kings, dukes, marshals, and such like. A greater fame and publicity attaches to their official acts and deeds than any to which "we poor devils" can aspire. Moreover, adds Brantome, with mild irony, they can any day devise (*excogiter*) "such new and wondrous means of accommodating differences, as you would never believe"—or not till you had read his book.

¹ GUISE FAMILY.—*Claude*, first Duke of Guise. *François*, second Duke, "Le Grand," Le Balafre, born 1519; assassinated 1563; left *Memoirs*. *Henri I.*, third Duke (1550); assassinated 1588, together with his brother Louis, the Cardinal (1556-1588). *Ch. de Lorraine*, fourth Duke (1571-1640), head of the Catholic League 1591, afterwards reconciled to Henry IV. *Henry II.*, fifth Duke (1614-1664); left *Memoirs* descriptive of his ineffective attempt to reconquer the kingdom of Naples.

That reminds one of a story about the late M. de Guise, the Great Duke, how in Francis II.'s time he settled a quarrel of long standing between M. de Maugiron and Captain Rance, of Champagne. It (the quarrel) originated at the time of Henry II.'s expedition to Germany, and as that monarch had absolutely forbidden all combats in the realm, it had to stand over till the accession of King Francis II.

Upon that auspicious event (1559), the prohibition of Henry II. being supposed to lapse on his death, M. de Rance seized his opportunity for meeting Maugiron.

M. de Guise, who was then in power, begged the King to forbid them and effect a reconciliation. So the parties were assembled in the Royal Cabinet and the ceremony was gone through as described above.

The only singularity—a somewhat revolting one—about the case was that as Captain Rance had lost a finger it was urged by some that the matter could not be settled by such an *accord*, but that they must fight; at least *the other party must lose some limb* of equal value, by the ancient law of Talion, or be killed, or there must be some very full form of satisfaction and pardon.

But to revert to the complex question of manners. That admirable Crichton M. de Guise had been heard to observe that if you wanted to make amends to a man you had seriously offended there was no harm in saying, "I beg your pardon," but you should do this with a hand on your sword or dagger, and with a confident expression, as much as to say that you use the words just to give gentlemanly satisfaction, and that *if that isn't enough* he can understand from your face and manner that you are quite ready to satisfy him in another fashion.

The utmost tact—let the reader note—should be used in this detail of just playing with the sword hilt, because if your demeanour is *too* haughty you may set the man's back up and have the whole thing to begin again, seeing that a disdainful look often stings as sharp as an insulting word.

There are, moreover, certain "fine shades" in the wording, the effect of which varies widely; *e.g.*, you may say simply, "I forgive me," or as aforesaid, "I beg your pardon" or "I ask it," and words to that effect, on which axioms of M. de Guise, again, we could, an we would, write volumes of commentary.

But as to the Royal settlement of that quarrel between Maugiron and Captain Rance, nobody really quite knows the rights of it. It rather appears that the King "took everything on himself," and confirmed to each, as by Royal patent, their characters as courageous and honourable gentlemen, which indeed they showed themselves to be afterwards, serving His Majesty in various capacities, so that it would have been rather a pity had they been killed in single combat.

And if only—if *only*—King Henry had done the same in the case of M. de la Chastaigneraye, that also would have saved a brave and gallant life for services such as he did actually render to King Francis, who, while he lived, persistently refused—as we know—to sanction this combat. He did so on the simple principle stated in the Privy Council specially held to consider uncle Chastaigneraye's request—a principle so obvious one wonders it were not oftener acted upon—that kings and princes ought never to sanction anything "of which no good result could possibly come."

It is true there was another reason (unstated here, though mentioned presently), which was perhaps the more cogent motive. In any case they were forbidden

to exchange cartels of any sort or kind, which prohibition lasted two years, nor dared they disregard it, as the King had a surprising fashion of enforcing his regulations.

It was the Signor Piero Strozzi¹ so famous afterwards, and an intimate friend of our "late uncle's," who strongly advised him to ignore this prohibition and kill his man *in ogni modo*—without any forms and ceremonies at all. "An Italian suggestion"—backed by the offer of a retreat into Italy and ample funds in the bank at Venice, which were obligingly placed at his service.

There he might wait till the Royal anger roused by his disobedience, or perhaps by the other objection (that of Jarnac being brother-in-law of the favourite Mme. d'Estampes) had evaporated. Besides, the King (Francis) was declining in years and near death, and Henry II. would succeed shortly, and then he would be forgiven and could return to the country, and enjoy the Royal favour.

But our chivalrous uncle could never be induced to take this step. No, he preferred the open lists and "above-board" procedure (*belles guerres decouvertes*); and though when King Francis did die the suggestion was repeated to him, he still remained firmly resolved to undertake this ill-fated duel.

It is here to be observed that any such prohibition as the above by any sovereign, prince, general, or the like, commanding any two persons *not* to fight, on pain of death, is only valid during the life of the authority who issues it, and on their death—unless the edict is renewed

¹ "General of the French galleys;" killed at the siege of Thionville in 1558.

by their successors—the parties are free to indulge the most unrestrained pugnacity.

To take a simple illustration which occurred at Orleans after the death of Francis II.

Messieurs de Loue and Bueil had been forbidden to fight, or exchange communication with regard to a certain grave quarrel between them; and this order they carefully observed.

But no sooner was the King dead than the very next morning De Loue attacked Bueil, stretched him dead on the pavement, and was off.

Some thought this immediate procedure a little irregular, and that His Majesty was offended by it. But the real authorities on duellist etiquette¹ dismissed the idea as schoolboy ignorance.

The author of the prohibition once dead, the prohibition had no more weight, and the parties' hands were untied.

It would have been a different matter, of course, if Charles IX. had been informed at once and had renewed the edict.

¹ *Les bien raffinez et entendus duellistes.*

"Raffinez" is a technical term of the time, which may be found in Regnier's satires and an Epistle of Gombauld's.

It was applied chiefly to young Gascon Galliards who whittled down the "point of honour" to a highly inconvenient nicety.

In the curious satirical miscellany of Theodore d'Aubigné (1551-1630), *Les Aventures du Baron de Foenestè*, an instructive chapter on the subject is entitled "*Des braves, des Raffinez et des Duels.*"

They were gentlemen—these Raffinez or their pupils—ready to fight you for a look (*ce sont gens qui se battent pour un clin d'œil*), for an informal greeting, if your cloak touched theirs, if you spat within four feet of their persons (a sensible reason, which we should like to see revived in the streets of London, 1903), or if *you were not the person they took you for*: as in the story there given by d'Aubigné.

"Are you Mr. So-and-So, of Auvergne?"

"No, sir, I am Mr. —, of Dauphiné."

"Good! Then let us kill one another." *And so they did.*

Here we discern something of the sophistry or sharp practice employed by the wide-awake schoolboy against the "new master." It is possible that the critics so condemned by the "Raffinez" thought that a new monarch in such a case ought to have a word to say before another of his fighting subjects was destroyed. And the "next-morning-before-breakfast" procedure left no room for this.

Brantome had already touched on what we may call the "international law" governing the matter. If your enemy challenged you to meet him outside the jurisdiction, there was no evading such an appeal as that except for some substantial let or hindrance, as in other orthodox processes.

A valid excuse, for example, might be that the *place was dangerous*, or again that it was so far off you couldn't afford the journey.

As to the first, the obvious remedy was the "safe conduct" to and from the spot, of which we have already had examples, which should be accorded by the Prince or other authority presiding at the contest.

If the challenging party made any difficulty about this, it might be inferred that you could decline the duel; but no. It was your business to see to the matter personally and get the Prince aforesaid to send you some respectable official—a chief trumpeter or tambour-major—a service which he can hardly have the decency to refuse.

All that, at least, was the usual practice until the aforesaid Council of Trent intervened in the matter—though in France, England, Scotland, Flanders, and some parts of Germany, and elsewhere where the Council has no weight (*se cache*), the old practice still prevails.

One may add that if the prince in question is

“suspect” of favouritism, or if he has a grudge against you (as we see must so commonly have been the case), or “wants” you for purposes connected with imprisonment or execution—well, one should flee from such a place of assignation “like the plague.”

Such the opinions of the “doctors”—in accord for once with the simplest of human instincts. Even the prospect of the most sanguinary duel was not to tempt one within reach of legal violence.

They also said—these “Raffinez—that if your King forbade one of those little tours abroad with “a friend of many years standing,” which might end like the most dangerous of modern Alpine excursions, you were at liberty to disregard his Royal opinion and go, because honour was a thing above princes.

To which our author replies, that it was all very well to talk, but princes did not think so, and had an awkward way of letting you know what they thought.

But then those “doctors,” we must remember, carried things to such length that they excused a son for challenging his father “when accused of *lèse majesté*, divine or human,” or other dishonourable crime. How else, their simple logic inquired, could he prove his innocence? And the father—note this—did his son more injury by the dishonour *than he had done benefit by begetting him*, a comparison which one can imagine the subject of endless dispute.

However, to go back once again to that question of the ascertainment of what actually happened in a duel—as to whether A. did or did not actually overpower B., and on B.’s request, grant him his life. Where the parties assert one thing and one another, the King can at least try and settle that, calling in for the purpose expert authorities and even criminal lawyers.

Of course if it could not be decided or "settled" they had to fight again.

The unfortunate thing was (as Brantome "has said" about thirteen times already, and would say again at still greater length if we allowed him) the "appeal," so to speak, of the aggrieved party is not always a success, and in such a case the King finds that by the injudicious concession of a "second trial" he has simply lost a valuable servant, a matter which must give him serious thought.

Wherefore a gentlemanly "accommodation," a sweep of the Royal broom over the affair, is much best. Then if either party still feels uncomfortable about his honour—well, he need not despair for that; he can always go and fight in some war (and this is indeed true of Brantome's time), like Fendilles did, and show that he is brave enough, in spite of one unlucky accident.

"That is enough on this subject" (*ce mot icy, et puis plus*). *It is.*

Though, you must know, there were people who boasted in a quite ridiculous fashion about having spared the lives of ever so many others, whereas, in act, one shrewdly suspects, they really didn't know how to finish them off properly, or they lost confidence, or hadn't sufficient pluck, or *were afraid of seeing their ghosts after death*, or were, perhaps, too excited about it, or too wildly delighted at coming off safe and sound themselves, or were too much in a hurry to go and have their own wounds dressed.

Certain God-fearing duellists, again, couldn't bear to give the *coup de grace* at all; and praiseworthy persons they were, not to be confused for a moment with those who feared the King and his justice if they were, and

were thinking chiefly of getting away before the provost-marshal appeared on the scene.

Others, again, feared, as we know, the relatives of their opponent, who had a way of resenting any extreme severity.

In discussing questions of etiquette, it is to be understood that we are following in the main those "Italian Captains" who are the real founders of the duel and its punctilios and the theory and practice of fencing.

The Spaniards were inferior to them. "And nowadays our gallant Frenchmen are the greatest masters, both for theory and practice."

The Italians, who are a shade more cold and cautious, also a bit more cruel, hold the theory that, in these cases of granting and sparing your adversary's life, your true duty is to bring him to the very last extremity of helpless defeat, but not to give him the death-blow. It was highly advisable to so damage him in the arm or leg that he couldn't be likely to trouble you again in a duel, or deny that you had spared his life; and you might (such is the horrid suggestion) give him "a few good gratuitous stabs about the nose and face, just to remember you by."

This may sound hard measure, but only consider such cases as that of the gallant and generous M. Matas,¹ of Henry II.'s Court—an eccentric gentleman who used to wear his feather in a particular fashion, which caused the *Greffier de l'Ory*, a born buffoon and inventor of weird oaths, to swear "by the worthy and wondrous feather of that fool Matas." The feather and the folly, however, are at the moment

¹ Claude de Bourdeille, Baron de Mastas.

neither here nor there, and the incident happened (though again 'tis no matter) one day when Francis II., just after his accession, had gone deer-hunting in the woods of Vincennes. With him was a certain young Apchon, called (one knows not why) Mouron, nephew of Marshal St. André.

Matas and this youth having quarrelled, withdrew from the Royal company to a bit of rising ground that is in the park there and fought. Matas, a veteran swordsman, who "knew the ropes," played with the young Apchon till, by a judicious turn of the wrist, he sent the boy's sword flying from his hands. Then, having reduced him to this helpless condition, he left him, simply saying, "You'd better learn to handle your sword a little better before you fight again with a man like me. There, pick it up—I forgive you; and as you're so young, no one need ever know anything about the matter."

And he turned to get on his horse again. But the young Apchon, in a frenzy of conceited passion, ran after him and stabbed him in the back. Matas fell dead.

Nothing more *was* done in the matter, moreover, because Apchon had, as has been said, an influential connection at Court, and Matas, a relation of the author's, had only Mme. de Valentinois to support his claim to justice, and that lady, by the death of Henry II., was no longer the power she had been.

The reader will probably know without being told what the Duke of Guise and other wiseacres opined, considered, and said on the rashness of the Baron de Matas and the general irregularity of such proceedings.

Brantome has the usual difficulty in seeing his way. How foolish to let an adversary off only to be

promptly killed yourself! On the other hand, he feels compelled to add, in a perfectly superfluous footnote, that veterans ought not to be hard on poor inexperienced boys, nor "gobble them up."

You might, moreover, get into great trouble, not for fighting, but for *challenging* a man in a wrong place—for instance, within sacred precincts. This happened in Francis I.'s time to the excellent M. de Cypiére, who carried a challenge to M. d'Andoin (another favourite of King Henry's—he died before Landrécy) for M. le Vicomte de Gourdon, who, like Cypiére, was in the train of the Duke of Orleans.

Yet—would you believe it?—the challenge was no more than this :

"I have just left M. le Vicomte de Gourdon, who requested me to tell you, if we met, that he has gone to hear Mass at St. Paul's, and hopes you will attend it in his company, and then, perhaps, take a walk with him as far as the Porte St. Antoine."

Could anything be more innocent? Very ingenious, doubtless, and technically giving no offence to the Royal household. All the same, the King was much displeased, seeing it was a challenge *in effect*, after the words the two had had the night before. And M. de Cypiére had to leave the Court. But at the request of the Duke he was afterwards pardoned, being (in brief) everything that could be asked in a courtier.

In another case M. des Bordes, nephew of the Marshal de Bourdillon, who fell in the battle of Dreux, had some sharp words with M. d'Yvoy Genlis, who afterwards died in prison in the low

countries, having been taken when marching to the relief of Valenciennes, then besieged by the Duke of Alva.

They fought (to omit other details of their biographies) in the park of St. Germain en Laye, and were both severely wounded—Des Bordes the more seriously, for he remained lame all his life.

Every one was very indignant, especially the great Guise, who, as grand-master of the Royal household and responsible for its privileges and dignities, gave strict orders to the provost and guards to discover *who had carried the challenge*. It came out that it was M. de Gersay, who, however, having scented danger, betook himself into hiding.

It is true that, being a favourite, he was pardoned, with a remonstrance, however, from both the Guises, securing that none of the parties were to return on pain of death.

And the said Great Duke, we are assured, had he lived, would have prevented many more of the scandalous affairs, and other follies which one often might witness in the palace—even the very halls and chambers of our kings.

It did indeed once happen that in the very ante-chamber of Henry III., and in the august presence of three presidents and five or six counsellors of the Court, who happened to be there waiting for His Majesty to come out, two gentlemen quarrelled and actually flew at each other with daggers drawn, on which the first President simply observed that "it was most disgraceful behaviour, and if they had attempted anything of the kind in his Court he would have had them prosecuted at once." The criminals had, however, the happy thought (suggested by friends)

of saying that it was all nothing but a bit of horse-play, and so got off.

So with M. de St. Luc¹ at Antwerp in the Chamber of M. d'Alençon, while he himself was in his Cabinet. He had absolutely exchanged blows with the Sieur. de Ganville, when the Prince of Orange came out, and, as it were, caught them at it. He said that if any one had ventured in anything like that anywhere about the Court of his master the Emperor it would have gone very ill with the delinquent.

It is said (though Brantome, alas! cannot vouch for the fact) that St. Luc made a disrespectful retort. The Prince had much better mind his own business; and as to the deceased Emperor, if he (Orange) had ventured to do in that monarch's lifetime what he had since done against his son (Philip II.) the "Emperor would have had his head off his shoulders long ago."

It is disappointing that the anecdote (which is of doubtful authenticity) tells us nothing of what happened after this to St. Luc, the Prince of Orange, or the furniture of the Royal ante-chamber.

Of course a Grand Seigneur like the Comte de Feria, might do strange things, even when travelling with Royalty. Still, when we learn that on severe provocation he once actually drew his sword, and in the very presence of the Queens Eleanor and Mary,² we wonder that Philip II. had enough influence to

¹ Governor of Xaintonge under Henry III. Grand-master of artillery to Henry Quatre. Killed in 1597.

² Eleanor of Austria, Queen of Portugal and afterwards of France, married Francis I., 1530; died in 1558. Mary of Austria (1503-1558), married (1521) Louis II. of Hungary, who fell in the great defeat of the Hungarians by the Turks at Mohacz, 1526.

secure his pardon. One should not do such things in the presence of two queens.

It was much the same with the Marquis de Villanne, when the Empress made her State entry into Toledo. Being a little jostled by some official who rode by his side, he laid a hand on his sword.

It was a serious matter had discipline been strictly asserted, for all the nobility were on his side, a man of such powerful connections. That was why the Emperor passed it over, as many offences were passed over in those days. Standards of manners and temper were not too exacting.

Doubtless, too, as Brantome urges, such impulses are scarcely under our own control, especially when honour is concerned, and most of all in the case of Frenchmen, "who are certainly of a more impatient temper than any other race."

Once when the *Sieur. de Bremian* gave a box on the ear to some gentleman in the lower hall of the Louvre, King Henry III. was so enraged—Brantome was present at the scene—that all mankind couldn't have saved the offender if he had been caught ; as the King had a clear idea that any such insolence and disorder was seriously pernicious to the Royal authority.

Which brings us to the great case of Bussy and the Comte de St. Fal.

We have studied the duel, as an institution, where it descends to mere domestic murder, so to speak, lightly flavoured with housebreaking. We have here to see it soar into the serious atmosphere of civil war. There was strife between Bussy and St. Fal. The King had given commandment to his princes and marshals and mighty men to accommodate this quarrel, but all to no purpose.

Then when this prince of libertines and fire-eaters absolutely rode into the Louvre with an escort of

some two hundred gentlemen, the King, who with his own eyes watched this procession from one of the palace windows, decided that it was too much in the way of quasi-regal pretension.

Among all the company there were but three, Grillon,¹ Neufvye, and Brantome himself, who in the complex politics of the time, could be described as belonging to the King's party. Of the others some were attached to M. d'Alençon,² some to other princes, and some (with a touching simplicity) "only to themselves."

Will the reader excuse this digression? The author, though feeling "a little astray" fears it might not have come in handy elsewhere.

Henry III., as has been said, took dire offence at this; and it is curious that in one of the numerous pamphlets written against this monarch—Brantome had read but does not name it—he is accused of having been the first to introduce the combat by challenge and given them his approval.

As a matter of fact we are assured that they began in Charles IX.'s time (1562-74), as illustrated in various cases already described; while Henry III. in his time did nothing but publish edicts against the practice, though, being kindly disposed towards his nobility, he did not always execute them with rigour.

¹ L. de Balbe de Berton de Grillon (1541-1615), one of the most genuinely famous warriors of his time, served in the Civil Wars, and distinguished himself at the Battle of Lepanto, accompanied Henry III. to Poland, afterwards attaching himself to Henry IV., of whom he became a close intimate. See his famous letter from that monarch. "Brave Grillon, pendés-vous de n'avoir esté icy près de moy lundy dernier à la plus belle occasion" (an engagement before Amiens) "qui se soit jamais veue" (Fournier, *Esprit dans l'Histoire*).

² Better known as the Duc d'Anjou, an ardent Protestant, and famous as a wooer of Queen Elizabeth. Died 1584.

Certain Catholics and religious folk no doubt disapproved of duelling altogether and in any form.

The Keeper of the Seals at the States General of Blois (1589) had spoken quite freely on the subject, condemning the duel as detestable, wicked, and impious. He took the old-fashioned ground that Christians ought to forgive offences.

That was all very well for priests or hermits. Applied to the larger sphere of social life it meant the abolition of the "point of honour"—male and female. So *M. le Garde des Sceaux* and the pamphleteer may say what they like. And as to Henry III., there was never any quarrel in his Court that His Majesty did not cause to be settled personally by some of his officers. True there were *three or four cases* where this could not be done, where, we are assured, a duel was inevitable and necessary. "I name no names. My readers will understand me well."

Alas! what the reader of Brantome's original text understands only too well—at this stage—is the fearful and dazing prolixity with which, when "anecdotes" begin to fail, he can spin out a thin, vapid, and jejune *discours*, compound of incoherent platitude and twice-told twaddle, from which the selection of intelligible matter bearing even remotely on his subject is like the pursuit of needles in a bundle of hay.

Duelling unchristian and forbidden by Divine ordinance! Well, our author is "no theologian" (just as he is no "duellist" when we want any point finally decided), but he would respectfully remind us that David and Goliath fought—though without any of the *supercherie* of the spiked collar—and that the combat was usually believed to have the Divine approval.

Besides, "the Italians say" that duelling is a just institution—and the Judge above approves what is just; and so on, and so on—"as I have said elsewhere."

Combats, for that matter, were fought in Italy in the time of Brantome's first visit here (in 1550), and even authorised by His Holiness the Pope, and fought too "with greater security than elsewhere," security, that is, of killing or being killed without interruption.

Various duels took place under Papal authorisation between great nobles, as for example that of Charles of Anjou and King Alfonso of Aragon, in which, by the way, King Alfonso was excommunicated—"perhaps for not appearing on the spot at the appointed time," perhaps for some other reason.

It is true that after the Antraguët-Quelus contest described above a certain Royal Chaplain¹ took upon himself to announce from the pulpit that the combatants who died on the spot were damned, and the survivors in no better case unless they repented—an audacious judgment for a mortal to presume to utter!

The fact is, however, that our author produces no real argument in favour of his cherished institution the duello, but that it was much better and more convenient than the practice of collecting large parties of your friends and supporters, gangs of hired bravos, cut-throats and rascals, and fighting your enemies in the streets, or the country, till—as used to be the case—man died like so many flies or wild beasts; whereas now only two or three are killed now and then—a more sensible and politic, if not ideally Christian, arrangement.

For example, in that charming city of Milan, when Brantome spent a month there—not only to see the

¹ One Maurice Poncet, vicar of St. Pierre des Arcs (*l'Estât Journal*, sub anno 1578).

sights but to take lessons of the famous M. Tappe, one of the best masters of the time (1566)—he will swear that not a day passed without his observing a score of these bands (quadrilles) who went about the streets skirmishing with each other. You came across the dead, any number of them, lying about the streets, for all their armour, their “jackets,” “sleeves of mail,” “gauntlets,” “close helmets” (*segrete*), and the like! The townsfolk, too, might be seen rushing out of the shops armed with cudgels to try and separate them; but these simple folk did mighty little for the cause of law and order, still less for their own skins.

All this is to say nothing of the vast expense of the board and lodging of all these paupered mercenaries, who used to be occupied as valets or counter-jumpers till they found some one with a quarrel on hand, but really lived as hired assassins, by letting themselves out as professional murderers, robbers, and ruffians from the “slums.”¹

Such gentry, such disorders, were to be seen in Paris, Milan, and half the cities of France, Spain, and Italy, and certainly the duel was a more dignified, less precarious, proceeding than that.

True the duellist might be killed, but he had a fair “run,” so to speak, for his money, and there was some decency and order about the procedure.

The other system led to such an outrageous state of chaos that in Piedmont, for example, the Prince de Melfi, to restrain the scandalous freedom of murder, violence, and trickery, devised some fine new laws which at first caused rather a sensation, though not before it was wanted. “Beware of the Piedmont *Hola!*” was a proverb in the land. When you

¹ *Vrays Enfants de la Mathe* (*mate*), the place where they used to congregate.

heard that war-cry, you might expect the next minute to be assaulted, murdered, or at least knocked on the head.

After a few dozen of the Prince's subjects had been strung up, they began to understand they must conform to the legal technicalities of the duel.

His Highness would send them (those whose quarrels could not be "settled") to fight it out in due form on the bridge at Pau, on *a spot specially selected by him for the purpose*, which provided the additional excitement that, if the duellist had not "a steady foot and eye," apart from any danger of his opponent's making, he would probably fall headlong into the river below, as happened to Rodomont and Roland in Ariosto.¹

The Marshal de Brissac,² who succeeded the Prince, enforced the same salutary regulations, so that Piedmont became in his time quite a school of warfare. Splendid combats took place there. And thus "many of our hot-headed compatriots were reduced to order, and calmed down in this fashion."

Therefore Brantome is altogether in favour of a small and orderly fight as against a large and disorganised one.

Saint Louis, Philip the Fair, Louis IX., and other monarchs, did, it is true, prohibit mortal combats altogether—that is, even those in orthodox form.

The great authorities, on the other hand, have always condemned the irregular and rustic species of duel.

No sort of honour attended these rough-and-tumble skirmishes in out-of-the-way spots among the woods

¹ "Orlando Furioso," xxxix. 35.

² Charles de Cossé, Comte de Brissac (1505-1563), one of the most famous of his distinguished family, Governor of Piedmont under Francis I., Henry II., and Charles IX.

and bushes, where anything you might do in the way of prowess remained as obscure as the shades in which you fought.

It was perhaps a sign of the decay of imaginative chivalry that long before Brantome's own time, when Renaud de Montauban inquired of a venerable Scotch prelate whether a knight-errant might not encounter fine adventures in the vast forests of Caledon, so famous of old time in this connection, the worthy prelate answered that that might very well be, but that no one would know anything about them, and that he (Renaud) had much better find some practical feat which could bring him real renown before the world.

He then told him all the story of the fair Ginevra, and hinted at the enterprise for her rescue, upon which Renaud proceeded to execute it.¹

We are here wandering into the realm of early fiction; and apropos of Orlando,² Brantome bids us note that he (when in love) illustrated an important principle of duelling etiquette (we must not say of common sense) by *refusing to fight at night*, after the fashion of robbers and brigands. One would have thought that, having been engaged with a stubborn enemy all day, one might (even in an epic of adventure) have knocked off at sunset, but it seems there were questions—more interminable than ever in the advanced stage of our *discours*—raised upon this point too!

It would seem that the great Bussy, when he in-

¹ "Orlando Furioso," v. 10.

² "Orlando Innamorato," the continuation by Boiardo and Berni (ob. 1536) of Ariosto's epic.

sulted the late Count de Grammont, a young man who bade fair to be as famous as any of his family but for an unlucky cannon-ball which carried him off at La Fère, was of Orlando's opinion.

It was at a ball at the Louvre, when Bussy, with his lady on his arm, took the *pas* of the Count as he was walking in his proper place and rank, an action which even our prejudiced author admits to have been neither wise nor justifiable. "But a quarrelsome man"—*que voulez vous?*—"must quarrel with somebody." And the fire-eating Bussy had a grudge (as far as may be divined through Brantome's tortuous grammar) against the whole Grammont family, which might account for a good deal.

However, the ball over, and the King gone to bed, as M. de Bussy was about to retire, up comes the gallant young Mauléon on behalf of his cousin, De Grammont, to say that the latter gentleman awaited Bussy on the Quay, and "would be very glad to have a word with him."

Which indeed from our experience of the thing in fiction sounds natural enough. But the oration which follows smacks of the ornate eloquence so commonly inserted into histories of the period of the Renaissance.

"Young gentleman," says Bussy, with that high-handed and disdainful air for which he was so famous, "Bussy does not fight at night: nor is he wont to display his valour to the stars or moon, which are quite unworthy (*sic*) to contemplate or comprehend them, but only to the sun which is as clear as they. Let those whose deeds are obscure and darkling seek the shades of night that knows not shame. But to-morrow morning," concluded the orator, breaking into a more practical vein, "as soon as the sun is risen, I will be at the spot you mention, or any other which your friend prefers. Come with him *and bring a couple of*



HENRY II., AFTER FRANÇOIS CLOUET.

From Niel : *Portraits des Personnages Illustres.*

[To face p. 162.]

sextons with you, for before leaving the spot I should like to see each of you buried with all due ceremony."

Quite a number of gallant captains approved this humour of Bussy's. And though another man might, in such a case, have been suspected of cowardice, there could be no question of the courage of Bussy—*il en avoit à vendre!*

It is possible too, Brantome suggests, that he was thinking of Alexander's conduct to Darius, in declining to surprise him during the night-time, which may sound absurd, but is really far from impossible. Such conscious reflection on classical models was characteristic of an age when history, even in capable hands, slid naturally on to the lines of Sallust or Thucydides, and sixteenth-century heroes, if not carefully restrained, were apt to be found doing and saying the things best described and reported by Cicero or *Tite Live*.¹

But nocturnal fighting was also highly dangerous. The Baron d'Ingrande fell at such an hour, "when the King—that guardian angel of law and order—"was asleep," and fell, moreover, "not without suspicion of treachery." At which, seeing how common it was in the day-time, we can scarcely smile.

Darkness, in truth, is detestable to your professional duellist, when he should be peacefully recruiting his strength for fresh deeds of violence.

It was another thing when, as in our lost wars of Tuscany, in the reign of Henry II. that famous Gascon

¹ See the preface of a famous History of the time by Pierre Matthieu, royal historiographer (1563-1621), and a note in my *Excursions in Libraria* ("The Wit of History," p. 241).

Captain la Hyre fought in the dining hall of Francesco d'Este, who had it lit up with torches and flambeaux, so that you might have thought it day-time.

There, in the presence of d'Este, the Cardinal of Ferrara, and a distinguished company, La Hyre, who afterwards earned greater fame in the Civil Wars and elsewhere, vanquished his man by torchlight. He was a friend of another noted duellist, Captain la Trappe, and Brantome had the story—so singularly devoid of interest or significance—from both of them.

The Parthians—it occurs to him as a happy thought—declined to pursue the defeated Roman General Crassus during the hours of darkness. That was an interesting and romantic trait in their nature.

The singularity of Bussy's conduct was rather, therefore, in the presumption in which he challenged two such young bloods as Mauléon and Grammont.

Not that this kind of audacity was unknown. The Gascon Seigneur de Gensac—it is always a Gascon—an excellent warrior, who fell at the siege of Bourges from an arquebus shot, did quite as much when he quarrelled with Sr. d'Avaret, a Huguenot, who died of the plague (poor man!) at Orleans.

He had his hand on his sword when another gentleman came up saying, "All very fine, Gensac, but I'll be hanged if my friend fights *without my having a hand in it*. So stop a bit."

"What!" says Gensac, quite at his ease. "D'you think one man can't fight two at once? Why, *the history books are full of it!* And so will I! Come on, both of you!"

As it happened, they were all prevented from going through this picturesque triangular *mêlée*; but people did admire Gensac's coolness at such a moment—as if

he had been discussing some academic point of history in cold blood.

And when, after the affair was all comfortably settled, somebody took him seriously to task with “My good fellow, what did you mean to do?” “Mean,” answered the young gallant. “*Mort Dieu ! I meant to be mentioned in the Chronicles !*”

And here at last we have the wondrous clue to so much that was done and dared simply for the modern reader’s instruction and amusement.

Among other hostile critics of the duel were, it is to be observed, the Turks.

At the great Chastaigneraye-Jarnac combat, amid the superb assembly of spectators were many ambassadors, including the representative of the Sultan Solymán the Great¹ who expressed pain and surprise that one French gentleman should fight another, much more that the King should expose to slaughter his particular favourites.

Such things were not done by the “barbarous Turk”; but Brantôme thought it an honourable distinction for Christians that they should be unable to put up with insult or allow others to give them the lie, and so thought Francis I. The ancient Romans and the Greeks, it is true, held the same opinion as the Turks, and never approved of duelling. So said some of the grand captains who had “poked their noses” into classical literature on the subject.

¹ Solymán the Great (1499-1566). By the capture of Belgrade (1521), of Rhodes (1522), the defeat of the Hungarians at Mohacz (1526), and the siege of Vienna (1529), and the struggle with Charles V. (1530-1), besides his conquests in Persia, Georgia and Tunis, he raised the Turkish Power to the zenith, from which it began to decline shortly after his death (battle of Lepanto, 1571).

There was, of course, the combat of the Horatii and Curiatti, though half of them, of course (Livy could not remember which half), were "Albans." Also in Plutarch we read of Marcellus having repeatedly fought in the lists and always with success; while a certain Statilius had even done this twenty-two times. These, however, were cases of "enemy against enemy," like the well-known case of Torquatus Corvinus and Scipio, when he killed that particularly big and savage barbarian who had challenged him.

Scipio, again, as we read in *Tite Live*, when he held those sports in Spain at the funeral of his father and uncle, instituted several single combats, among others one between two cousins, Ortua and Corbis, who elected to decide their differences before him. Also before Capua, Jubellus of that city and Asellus, a Roman soldier, by leave of their generals, exchanged defiances and fought in sight of the two camps. Another Capuan, Badius, challenged Quintus Crispinus, but that was a less serious affair. They had been friends before, and the Roman went out with great reluctance, protesting they had quite enough enemies on their hands already without their wasting time in killing each other.

But as the Capuan kept calling him contemptuous names and his fellow-soldiers remonstrated with him for the disgrace he would incur, he obtained his general's permission and ran his adversary through the shoulder with a lance. Dismounting then to finish him off, he was anticipated by the other, who took to his heels and ran away.

Of Roman against Roman, however, we are assured there are very few contests to be found, if any.

For it is to be observed that when Sertorius challenged Metellus in Spain, though the soldiers on both sides thought it quite right that captain should

fight captain (a practice which might have prevented many a war), especially as both were Romans, Metellus refused, some thought, on the unromantic ground that he was an elderly man in broken health and Sertorius in the flower of youth and first-class training. His army ridiculed and abused him, but he only laughed and replied (quoting Theophrastus) that "a general should die like a general and not like a common soldier."¹

The point is, however (a thing never to be lost sight of in this discourse), that *Roman did not fight with Roman*, even when this would have been a popular proceeding. On the contrary, they discovered, in at least one classical instance, a far more excellent way of settling differences, described in the commentaries of Julius Cæsar.²

Pulvio and Varennus, two soldiers who were perpetually engaged in quarrelling as to which had the precedence of the other in bravery, were with the rest of the Roman forces under the young Cicero ("a braver man," says Brantome, "than his father") on one occasion besieged by the Gauls, when, at a crucial point in the attack, "Now," says Pulvio, "what better opportunity do you ask than this for proof of your valour? Let this day decide our quarrel."

And so, as all students of the classics are aware, they

¹ In this interesting campaign (75 B.C.) Sertorius, whose mobility, simple habits, and sporting knowledge of a mountainous country were his strong points, having only some 7,000 irregular troops, successfully defied four Roman generals with 120,000 foot, 6,000 cavalry, and 2,000 slingers and bowmen. It is especially recorded of him that, like De Wet in South Africa, he "gained as much by flying as he could have done by conquering!" (Plutarch's *Lives*—Sertorius).

² De Bello Gallico, v. 44.

plunged down among the enemy and fought with great vigour, each repeatedly saving the other's life, till everybody agreed that the original question—which man was the braver, had now become perfectly insoluble. Cæsar—with a brevity our author regrets (*me semble qu'il demeure un peu court*) but would do well to imitate, does not say if they ever quarrelled afterwards. Possibly he thought enough had been said on the matter. But we feel convinced, had these two Roman soldiers been young bloods of Brantome's period they, or the *docteurs duellistes* would have gone on "refining" for the rest of the campaign.

For, let us observe, *Pulvio made the original suggestion.*

Was not that a concession of the "point of honour," and a practical refusal of single combat?

Varennus, again, only jumped down—we have Julius Cæsar's word for it—*because he was afraid of what other people would say (omnium veritus existimationem)*. Could he be allowed any credit for that?

Yet Pulvio was the first to have his life saved.

Varennus, however, slipped or fell into a situation of greater danger, whence Pulvio rescued him.

The question, it will be seen, is full of problems on which the "Raffineurs," we are sure, could "gloss" for whole chapters on end.

It is said that the two heroes got back safe, "having each killed ever so many of the enemy." *How many?* A plain figure or two might surely have ended the controversy. But, of course, no one thought of this.

To return, however, to our mutttons, a very similar



MONSIEUR DE LAUTREC

LAUTREC, AFTER FRANÇOIS CLOUET.

From Niel: *Portraits des Personages Illustres.*

[To face p. 168.]

incident happened at the taking of Pavia when Lautrec¹ was on his way to Naples.

La Chastaigneraye the elder ("my uncle") and the Sr. de Condalle had just quarrelled, but they marched none the less gallantly to the assault, Chastaigneraye carrying a sword and buckler (*rondelle*), and Condalle a pike and a sword.

Our poor uncle's sword broke in his hand, and left him in a sad quandary—"unable to hurt his enemy"—when Condalle, drawing his own weapon from its sheath, said, "I can't see so brave a man as you wasting your time² for want of arms. Here, take mine for a bit. This pike is sound enough. Let us at them. If the others fight as we will, the place is ours." And so it was, for Chastaigneraye gladly took the sword and made good use of it. And Lautrec and his captains highly approved this graceful act, and made good friends of the two who before had always been irreconcilable (the reader will never guess why) because they were of *too high family*.

There was, in fact, nothing you could say of the House of Grilli and Condalle which you could not say of that of Brittany, Vivonne, and Chastaigneraye. Of that there was no possible doubt. And this kind of aristocratic equality was quite as embarrassing as that of Varenus and Pulvio, especially when both parties were, like so many of Brantôme's heroes, "punctilious, cantankerous, and unmanageable,"³ to the last degree.

However, after this they became most intimate

¹ Odet de Foix, better known as Lautrec, one of the most famous generals of the age, Marshal of France, the King's lieutenant-general in Italy, was wounded at Pavia, 1525, and died at the siege of Naples, 1528.

² *Chaumer* (lit. "cutting straw"), *a faute d'armes*.

³ "Poinetilleux, harnieux, et escalabreux"—epithets lavished by Brantôme upon his warlike contemporaries.

friends, and both fell in this same war, with their famous general, at the siege of Naples.

But we were saying that the Romans never fought against each other ; and in fact there were laws against the practice. Nevertheless, it would have been much better if Pulvio and Varennus had done so once for all, instead of nursing their mutual indignation for so long. They would then have been as renowned, says Brantome, as the aforesaid Horatii and Curiatii. That famous combat was, of course, not a private but a public duel, arranged to settle the fate of the city of Alba, about 670 B.C., and the trios on each side fought from the sternest sense of duty, and with the desperation described by Livy ;¹ also there was a wonderful representation of the combat which Brantome had seen in the Town Hall of Lucca, the figures in all varieties of posture and defence, nothing but speech and movement wanting. He even fancied that the new Italian fencing-masters must have got "some of the play they taught us" from that source.

Mark Antony, it is well-known, defied Octavius to single combat, though he (Antony) was the elder man. Octavius replied that there were "plenty of other ways of dying without that"—a reply thought scarcely worthy of a monarch.

It may be urged that he was not personally brave, and showed as much at the battle of Philippi.

More unpardonable was the case of Humbert,² the Dauphin of Viennois, who, having made a treaty with Count Aymé (Amadeo) of Savoy, seized the first

¹ *Hist. Rom.*, i. 25, 26.

² Humbert I. (1220-1307) and Amadeo V., the Great (1249-1293).

favourable opportunity, when the Count was otherwise occupied, to break it.

On this Amadeo sent him a formal challenge to meet him and give account of his cowardly treachery, man to man in the lists or army against army. The Dauphin simply sent a verbal reply by the herald saying :—

“Good friend, tell your master that the might and virtue of princes does not consist in their bodily force.” If the Count thought himself so particularly strong and robust, he would undertake to say that any one of his *bulls* was much stronger, and Amadeo could have one of them, whenever he liked, to try his strength upon ! As to the army, he would observe that if the Count was particularly ready to fight now, he himself hoped to be so presently, and would come and attend to him and choose his own time.

And so he did a little while afterwards, when he put to rout the rearguard of Amadeo’s forces as they were retreating laden with booty.

This was a wordy reply to a challenge where an encounter in the lists might have been more glorious. Still one does not know.

A great prince was not always bound, where he had a material advantage, to give himself away. Thus when during the Crusades the noble Franks with the Christian host were besieged in Antioch, and suffering fearful privations they sent Peter the Hermit¹ with a message to the Paynim general, Corban,² offering on the

¹ Peter the Hermit of Amiens preached the first Crusade and led it to the East 1095 ; died 1115.

² *Kerboga*, the Emir of Mossul, 1098.

part of the Christian princes that if he would send out a single champion, or a company, or a whole army, they would meet him man to man in the field and settle their difference. Which, as they could not get out otherwise, was extremely kind.

But Corban was astute enough to reply that it was usual for the conquering party to dictate terms and conditions, and that as the Christians did not seem to realise their condition, or pretended not to, they should not be allowed *the privilege of choosing by what death they should die*.

The Princes, if they cared to know, would all be sent prisoners to the Emperor of Persia, and the common soldiers made slaves or cut in pieces like some accursed and fruitless tree.

Happily this dreadful threat was never executed, as by a spirited sally the heathen host was afterwards put to flight.

Dismissing the question of honour between princes and princes, it was often asked :

Could a subject fight his sovereign?—the answer being usually that he might be admitted to share the lists with him, if he were the offended party, not otherwise.

The commoner question—whether a soldier might challenge a captain—came up for discussion during the leisure hours of the siege of Malta. It was agreed by the Grand-master, the Marquis de Pescayre, and others that any man who had had two years' practical service in the ranks might enjoy this privilege, or in any case on obtaining his discharge, might fight any one he pleased. Needless to say under ordinary circumstances anything like an insult to a superior officer would be severely punished, not but that captains were made nowadays by dozens who had no sort of right to any rank at all, owing to all kinds of exigencies, or

the mere inability on the part of the authorities to provide them with pay.

The author's gallant brother, Captain Bourdeille, had, by the way, been much incensed because M. de Bonnavet¹ enticed away from his service a Gascon soldier, Tripaudière, whom he (Bourdeille) had taken up and trained and made a favourite of and shown the wars in Piedmont, Hungary, and at Parma—aye, and instructed him in swordsmanship too, at which he was no mean hand.

So Bonnavet, having given the said Tripaudière a captaincy, his former commander challenged him in his new rank, and they would have fought on the aforesaid bridge at Pau, but other more sensible captains interfered and brought the parties to M. de Brissac to be reconciled.

They said it was beneath Bourdeille's dignity to fight a man who had only three days before been a common soldier. And, in fact, he was finally persuaded to accept a profound apology from the offender, but he never liked him again.

A similar question might arise between a soldier and a drummer, and the soldier might, if he chose, plead seniority of rank. But popular feeling was all in favour of a combat, especially if the drummer were a brave fellow, whose officers would allow him to exchange his drum for an arquebus. Then the two might go off and kill and be killed, or wound each other "to death" (an expression which never has its literal sense in this text) to their hearts' content.

Apropos, by the way, of the theory of choice of

¹ Presumably a son of the famous Admiral of France, killed at Pavia, 1525.

arms, the main principles of which have been laid down already—that is, for formal combats in the lists—it was questioned whether the same strictness could apply to the ordinary combat by challenge. If an enemy or a particular friend whose last meal had disagreed with him, chose to say, “Meet me at such and such a place, with such and such arms, in your coat or in your shirt, with sword and dagger, or sword and cloak, on horseback or on foot, with lance or pistol, with defensive armour or not, and so on,” were you to be considered bound to respond to the invitation in every detail?

Because some authorities say you may go or not, or if you do go, wear just whatever clothes and arms you please. Seeing there are no friends, “confidants,” or judges to settle these particular matters, nor discuss them, the parties or their seconds (if they have seconds) must manage for themselves. And the *offended party*, who is of course the challenger, must be prepared to oblige the other (*s’accorder à tout*) in every way, so as to secure satisfaction for the wrong done him. Otherwise the offender will simply raise an infinity of subterfuges, cavillings, punctilios, in order, if he wishes that, to put off fighting.

Of course he ought not to do this, but offer frank reparation by arms or words; but we are considering what often happens.

The challenger, on the other hand, if he is injured or wounded in an arm or leg, cannot be withheld from suiting himself with the arms that he prefers, which is reasonable enough. Or, again, something of exactly equal risk to both parties may be proposed. Thus, if your opponent was fussy and pedantic about the choice of weapons, there were plenty of precedents for inviting him to drink the other half of a cup of cold poison or to walk about a room of which the floor was

covered with razors, though both these methods might be considered objectionable and fantastic.

Still, it was absurd to suppose that whenever some young sprig turned up fresh from Italy and the hands of Patenostrier, Hieronymo, Francesco, Tappe, Flaman, or the *Sieur. d'Aymard* of Bordeaux (all excellent masters in their day), and came to Court thirsting for glory and sought a quarrel and demanded to fight you with sword alone, for example, or sword and dagger—it was absurd, we say, to suppose you were bound to oblige him in every particular.

Many a thoughtful and respectable gallant would reply, "No, I'll fight you on horseback with a pistol or with a lance," and so on, so as to avoid the other's superiority in fencing.

Of course if the quarrel was itself originated by a bit of sharp practice, why then you might bring into the lists any engine of destruction you could get there.

But even without that there were often very fine distinctions to be traced. Thus in an instance noted by our author, which demands the reader's most careful attention.

A certain cavalier, having "a word to say" to another, went forth to accost him mounted on a good charger, and when they met on the road applied the usual epithets to his person and character, without, however, producing the usual effect. The other simply "shrugged his shoulders" and went off without demanding any kind of satisfaction, after the fashion in which small boys are apt to resent the insults of their overgrown companions.

Why? it was asked.

"Couldn't you see?" was the answer. "*He* was on a splendid charger while *I* had only a wretched

little colt that could hardly be turned with one hand."

What then should be done?

After some reflection he sent a second to the well-mounted party, challenging him to fight "in his shirt, with sword and dagger."

The latter sent word back by his representative, "Impossible; would be glad to meet him on a good horse, with a sword." When asked to give his reasons he argued, "Well, if the fellow made such a fuss about my being well mounted, the natural presumption is that if he were in that position himself he would do wonders" (*faïroit rage*), "and it couldn't be anything but generous to give him the chance, as that was the point between us at the moment of the offence."

Still the other declined the combat on horseback, though in that most authorities thought he was wrong, for the reasons already given. However, after a while he and his second, on consideration, changed their minds about it. "They would fight on horseback," they said, but at the moment they "didn't happen to have a horse." It would be all right, if the other party would send in two unexceptionable chargers and they would choose which they liked best.

Fiddlesticks! said the other side. It was ridiculous to suppose a rich man like that could be without horses. He was well known to have several excellent ones in his stable. So, for that matter, his second had three or four on the spot, though he absolutely declined to lend one when he was asked. As to supplying one's adversary with a couple of horses and having them examined, and one selected by the hostile seconds, that, they urged, was a thing absolutely unheard of except in the case of formal combats in the lists and when one party selected some very peculiar kind of arms which the other had not got with him, so that they were

obliged to ask for them, or at least for an allowance of time in which to get them.

Those were the only cases where one of two parties could be compelled to provide the other with horses or arms.

And on this opinion the reader may safely act. It seems only natural when a man, a “friend of years’ standing,” as we may assume, writes familiarly, “Fight me in your shirt with a sword and poniard,” the other should answer, “Very sorry, but couldn’t think of it ; I should die of cold in this weather, or catch a cold or a cough or a rousing pleurisy.”

He did not go out duelling, a man would reply in such a case, to be killed, but, on the contrary, to survive ; and he feared the inclement season more than his adversary’s steel.

As to that, there is sense and propriety enough in insisting on fighting in your coat ; while, on the other hand, to engage in a white shirt is simple folly.

But if your adversary does wear a coat—well, we have already seen what is, under such circumstances, the duty of a good second.

Besides the painted cuirass *à la Millaud*, one had to be aware of more homely forms of *supercherie*—“rolls of paper,” for example, concealed, after a fashion not unknown to schoolboys, about the duellist’s person. These examinations often produced unpleasantness. Of course, in the formal combats, if the challenger invited you to “fight in your shirt” you had to, and there was an end of the matter. *Only it was well to see that he did.*

Brantome does apologise for treating this subject—the choice of arms—at a length we have endeavoured to conceal from the reader.

He only wishes that he could have handed the pen to others. If only "an Admiral Chastillon (late deceased in the unfortunate disturbances of August, 1572), a d'Andellot, a Guise (the great), a Montluc, a Marechal de Bellegarde, a Biron (father or son) would have done it, the result would have been something really worth reading."

Merely pausing to note his use of the indefinite article, we may acquiesce in the inference. As these distinguished "captains and colonels and knights in arms," to whose opinion we are so incessantly referred, did not, would not, or could not write this *discours*, we may well thank our author for having done so.

At this point, little more than two-thirds way through his volume, he becomes dimly conscious of having very little more to say; but thinks it perhaps advisable to add a supplemental chapter (*enfiler un autre*) on another question:

Ought one of two generals commanding in the field to accept a challenge from the other?

For example, when the famous Marquis de Pescayre was helping to drive the French out of the Milanese, he besieged the town of Como, then held by M. de Vandenesse, elder brother of M. de la Pallisse.¹ The place was so hard pressed, so attacked and so battered, that presently it had to yield, on the condition that all lives and properties should be respected.

However, when the garrison prepared to march out no restraint of the kind was exercised, and the whole town was sacked and plundered by the Land-Knechts and the Spaniards before the very eyes of Vandenesse, who, swallowing his rage, sent a trumpet at once to Pescayre with a challenge of mortal defiance.

¹ Jacques Chabannes, Sr. de la Palisse, a famous French captain, killed at Pavia, 1525.

The Marquis, it is said, would cheerfully have accepted, but the troops would not hear for a moment of their beloved general replying to such a cartel, or being mixed up with such a combat. He was, they said, truly enough a "public character," engaged in the service of the Emperor and the world at large, and under no obligation to risk his life in any private affair. So they kept him back in his own despite, and the proposed "affair" was indefinitely put off, to the regret of both parties. Unluckily for M. de Vandenesse he commanded the rearguard a little later in Admiral Bonnivet's¹ disastrous retreat from Italy, and died from an arquebus shot in the shoulder received at Romagnano where our troops were defeated with heavy loss. The Marquis, who commanded the attacking force, expressed the bitterest regret on hearing of it, and cursed his fortune for having deprived him of an enemy he had considered specially reserved to provide him with a glorious triumph. After the defiance received he had looked forward to nothing so eagerly as meeting him in the lists and clearing his honour.

A Spanish rodomontade, says Brantome, which might remind one of Octavius lamenting the death of Cleopatra, whom he would have liked to lead in triumph to Rome; or rather—"to descend at once from great to small"—of the Spanish soldier who was always praying and having Masses said for the health of an enemy of his who had been wounded in a battle.

Wasn't it all the same to him, he was asked, if the man died of his wounds? "No," was the answer; "I should be bitterly distressed to hear of his dying

¹ G. Gouffier de Bonnivet, Admiral of France, entrusted with the command of the army in Italy, 1523, was responsible for the defeat of Pavia, where he fell.

except by my hand. I must kill him; if not, I should kill myself for disappointment."

There was boasting for you !

But to return to the great and their doings. A similar story is to be read of René of Anjou.¹ On entering the kingdom of Naples he despatched a herald to Alfonso of Aragon, bearing a bloody gauntlet (as was the custom in such cases) with a mortal defiance from his master, who claimed to be King of Naples. Alfonso accepted the glove, and asked if René wished to fight with his army or man to man. The answer was "with his army" (though "man to man" Brantome thinks would have been finer).

Alfonso replied that he would accept the challenge, and seeing that under the circumstances, as the provoked party, he had the choice, he would select for the field of battle the plain between Nola and Lacera, and that in a week he would be ready for the contest here with his army; as indeed he was, but René never appeared nor made any effort to fight.

It is true that he went and encamped on the ground Alfonso had left, and the chronicle in which some legal luminary of the time records the event explains that René was detained by his barons on the ground that he had no right to put his person and realm in danger without consulting them and the chief persons of the State, the interests of which were involved.

Alfonso, on the other hand, after receiving the

¹ René, Count of Anjou and Provence, Duke of Lorraine and Bar, and King of Sicily (1408-1480). His unsuccessful attempt in the kingdom of Naples (1438-1442) was repulsed by Alfonso V., the Magnanimous (1384-1458). René is more famous as the patron of letters in his county of Provence and the author of several poems.

challenge, spent some time in seriously considering whether, being a king, it would be right for him to go out and meet René, who was only a duke ; but being naturally brave, as his recorded exploits show, and ready enough to fight, he put aside this excuse as cowardly and beneath him.

The King of England being invited once by the Duke of Orleans¹ to break a lance or two, either with him alone, or with ten or with a hundred cavaliers on each side, "for the love of the ladies" or for the mere fun of the thing," replied that there could be no equality between his own Royal Majesty and his lordship, but that, merely as a matter of courtesy and honour, he would condescend of his Royal *gaieté de cœur* to meet him and do his best—an arrangement, Brantome thought, equally honourable to both parties.

Another example from our own age. The first time M. d'Alençon, the King's brother, went into Flanders,² there was a gentleman of Provence, the Chevalier d'Oraison, who had a difference with M. de Bussy. So to settle it, and also as a bit of bravado and ostentation, he went off from Paris and the Court, taking with him the Seigneur de Gouville, then the most famous swordsman in France, who wanted to fight M. de Fervaques (with whom he was, so to speak, on duelling terms) in the camp of Don John of Austria.³ Historians may be interested to note that it was then a recognised custom for Frenchmen to fight for or against the Spaniard, as they pleased.

On arrival they called on His Highness and explained that they had come to join his service, and also to

¹ In 1402.

² In 1578.

³ Don John of Austria, natural son of Charles V., and one of the most famous captains of his age. Won the battle of Lepanto, 1571. 1546-78.

challenge to mortal combat two other French gentlemen in the opposite camp (that of Monsieur), to wit MM. de Bussy and Fervaques. They requested the favour of his patronage and a trumpeter to carry the cartels, all which he readily accorded, being glad enough in this fashion to put some sort of affront on M. d'Alençon, especially as they (the would-be combatants) were personal friends of his.

The challenge was despatched and promptly accepted, but on hearing of it Monsieur also added a special message of his own saying that the sport was too good for him (d'Alençon) not to take his share, and he would be delighted if Don Juan himself would join in and make a third. They would settle time, place, and everything, and be quite ready for him, and only too delighted by those means not merely to settle one or two private differences, but to extinguish the flames of what might become a great war.

Don Juan, who had never dreamed of any consequences of this sort following on his action, was a good deal taken aback at first, but recovering himself, as a gallant and worthy son of his father, accepted the challenge and determined to answer it on the spot.

Nevertheless "these great captains," who know so well how to manage things, and even, for that matter, the Spanish soldiery themselves, who began to show a mutinous attitude on the point, declined to permit their general to go and risk himself and his country on some significant point of honour, seeing that if that was allowed every general might well find himself spending all his time in replying to challenges sent for that special purpose instead of attending to more obvious duties.

So that affair too was nipped in the bud.

And the Spaniards showed a considerable grudge against these two French gentlemen who had come in

and disturbed military discipline and arrangements by their cartels and challenges.

We have a recent example, illustrative perhaps more of "these last wars" than of any profound principle of duelling, in the case of d'Aubeterre, a simple captain of foot, defying M. d'Espéron, a colonel—such a ridiculous impertinence that all the world was ready to jump down his throat! (*luy courir assus*).

D'Espéron was in the Royal service, d'Aubeterre (leaving the King, who had conferred many favours upon him) had joined the Catholic League. After many attempts in that cause, finding himself unable to tackle such big game as the cities of Angoulême, Cognac, and Xaintes, he betook himself to the lesser fry, and by the aid of his brother the Baron, surprised the Castle of Villebois. It belonged to his aunt, the Marquise de Mezieres, who had received him only a few days before and made the said Baron governor of the place. Thus finding a foothold to make war on the district held by d'Espéron, about Angoulême and Xaintes, he committed extensive depredations.

D'Espéron was away at the time, but returning after the King's death (1574), and being determined to clear his territory of these freebooters and recover the place, at first tried ordinary means, sending a trumpeter to summon them to surrender, to which they paid no sort of attention.

Then he made preparations for besieging them in serious and professional form, on which d'Aubeterre sent his challenge to d'Espéron, inviting him to single combat.

The latter in a few words replied that he was busy on the King's service, and when he had despatched that, would be happy to attend to him

Meanwhile he (the speaker) was a gentleman of honour, and whoever said otherwise (which seems to imply that d'Aubeterre had said so) was a liar.

And off he marched with his troops to the siege of Villebois, and captured the castle, too, in a week (though every one thought it would have taken him a good month), and that, too, right under the nose of d'Aubeterre, who had retired into his own castle (of that name), and never ventured to disturb him. Not but that d'Espernon's camp might easily have been surprised, as his men were tired, and not in overpowering force either. Nor did he render the slightest help to his brother the Baron, nor other friends in the place, for all his fine promises, and they were almost all of them killed or hanged.

After that M. d'Espernon went off into Perigord, capturing the castle and city of Nontron without suffering the least let or hindrance from him, though to our certain knowledge he (d'Aubeterre) had with him a capital force of brave fellows who might easily have helped him to such an enterprise.

All which, one may observe, however irritating as a reminiscence of the last Civil War, throws little light on duelling; Brantome's only reflection being—one in which most unprejudiced spectators will agree—that d'Aubeterre had much better have marched out his men and fought instead of wasting his time scribbling cartels. For it seems he was not contented with one, but composed ever so many of vast length and formality, which people said were more like the themes and exercises he had learnt to write at Geneva, where he was born, educated, and "indoctrinated," than the challenges of a cavalier, which should be as brief as possible.

Though after all d'Espernon kept his word, and after having properly ordered his public affairs, did not

fail to offer to fight him. At least some say, though others deny, that he first offered to go to Blaye on the mere word of De Lussan, who was more d'Aubeterre's friend than his (and we know how dangerous such a practice was), and then to take him on in the courtyard of the Marquis de Trans, but each time there were difficulties. That, at least, is what d'Espernon's friends say; others say the contrary. It doesn't matter much to Brantome (*c'est le dernier de mes soucis*), and need not to the reader.

There is no doubt at all that d'Espernon, on his side, wasted no time, but carried on the campaign with sufficient vigour, finally forcing d'Aubeterre to abandon the League—merely to save his own life and property—to betake himself into France and make his peace with the King.

There once again this indefatigable gentleman took up his pen and began to compose more "cartels." Indeed, it is said they were not composed "out of his head," but forged (*non de sa teste, mais forgés*).

These were sent by a tambour to d'Espernon at Xaintes, though the unfortunate messenger, who knew nothing of it, might have been hanged for such impertinence to his colonel. However, d'Espernon treated him with clemency, though some do say he had him flogged in his kitchen to within an inch of his life, which was thought only reasonable.

Anyhow, d'Espernon's answer was that he (d'Aubeterre) had never replied to the previous reflections on his veracity. As soon as he did, he (d'Espernon) would come and talk to him, and when he had finished with the King's business in Guienne he would come into France and challenge d'Aubeterre to meet him—and the King's army.

And so he did; for, having settled certain private affairs in Gascony and collected his forces, he went to

the King with 2,000 footmen and 200 good horse, a seasonable reinforcement as it happened. And then some people do say (what seems scarcely credible) that d'Aubeterre, knowing of his coming, left the King's suite and retired to his home.

By the general opinion of all the authorities, including the Marshal de Biron, these cartels and challenges of M. d'Aubeterre stood condemned.

It was absurd that a simple gentleman, the seneschal of a little province like Perigord, one of the smallest in the country, and a man who had never attained any particular distinction, should have the impudence to defy a duke and peer of France and colonel of infantry, one who had diplomatically managed his King (*gouverné paisiblement son Roy*)—no inconsiderable feat in those days—and for ten years been at the head of affairs.

Still it was never any fault of his (d'Espernon's) that the combat did not come off. For if he had ever met d'Aubeterre in the field there is no shadow of doubt they would have fought, however many wise reasons and well-intentioned friends stood in the way of it. And when the King begged him to be reconciled he refused this till the matter had been discussed by the officers of the Crown, saying it concerned the honour of all of them.

Last of all, a certain gentleman, "whom you will know without my naming" (we do not, but suppose it was the great M. de Guise), reconciled them a year later without any ceremony and persuaded them to embrace one another—after exchanging a collection of challenges and denials and insults and defiances which had astounded the world.

The reason of which (far more significant than the fact) was that he (d'Espernon) had to go into Provence, *and did not like to leave such an enemy behind him.*

Though, in fact, he had sworn a hundred times he would never be reconciled, but would have d'Aubeterre's life, *and had already presented his spouse* (our author's niece, and, needless to say, one of the best and most beautiful of women) *with a widow's cap!*

However, even this incredible piece of savagery did not prevent their being reconciled, and under "circumstances" so favourable to d'Espéron that d'Aubeterre even came to him or the Constable for the purpose at Angoulême, where they made still better friends.

It is thus that one should seek audience of the great, but with discretion.

Something rather similar happened to the gallant De la Chastre, who quarrelled on some perfectly frivolous ground with De Drou, captain of M. d'Alençon's Swiss Guard, and was challenged by him one day at the Court of Monsieur.

De la Chastre¹ would have fought readily enough, but by the advice of the military authorities he was arrested. They would not have a young gentleman fight against so skilled a veteran, one who had given so many proofs of his valour and might any day be the saving of the State.

Similarly, on the occasion when M. de Saintluc² challenged the aforesaid Gouville at Antwerp, he also, when going out of the town, was arrested by La Vergne, Captain of the Guard.

He was not allowed to fight, it would seem, because a sort of fancy value attached to him as the holder of more offices and orders than need be enumerated. On

¹ Claude, Baron de la Chastre (1526-1614), Marshal of France, at first a noted "Ligueur," afterwards made profitable terms with Henry Quatre.

² F. d'Espinay de St. Luc of 1597, Grand-master of Artillery.

the other hand, there was nothing against Gouville, and no one need have felt it anything but an honour to meet him.

Thus, when St. Gouard returned from being ambassador in Spain, he had a little difference with a certain gentleman of Xainctonge.

A few preliminary insults had been exchanged, when the King heard of it and sent a herald to the gentlemen pointing out that St. Gouard was a man of high rank, Royal ambassador, Chevalier of the Order (of the Holy Spirit), and various other things, and summoning the gentleman of Xainctonge to appear before His Majesty and explain his conduct. He, however, replied that he knew nothing of all that; he would have gladly recognised St. Gouard as ambassador *in Spain*, but not in Xainctonge, and that if he was such a very distinguished and exalted personage he had better behave as such. These and other messages were given the said herald, who contrived somehow to convey them to the King without actually facing his indignation.

One gathers that the favour here shown to the ex-ambassador was supposed to be balanced by the honour done to the private individual by sending him a herald, "for all the world as if he had been a foreign prince" instead of a trumpeter, an archer of the guard, an usher of the Council of the Court, or even a sergeant of the mace.

Not long since, however, the Mareschal d'Ornano and M. de Montespan, the King's viceroy in Guienne, nearly fought, in spite of all obstacles and Royal prohibitions. But not quite.

That scandal and nine days' wonder was somehow averted, for which we are invited to admire the supreme tact and wisdom of our kings. Perhaps—if we are to admire anything at all in the general condition of courtly society.

From the distinctions of ranks and honours we naturally pass to those of costume.

On the occasion of a great pageant and procession at Bayonne in honour of the Queen of Spain there were present as the escort of Monsieur a large company of princes, lords, chevaliers of the Order, captains of Gens d'Armes, Gentlemen of the Chamber (of the King and of Monsieur), and gentlemen servants, wearing gorgeous State dresses of scarlet and crimson velvet, decorated more or less richly with silver.¹

The princes, dukes, marquises, &c., down to the captains, formed one class dressed nearly alike. The Gentlemen of the Bedchamber did not wear so much ornamentation, the gentlemen servants less still.

Among them was an accomplished and cultivated gallant of the Court, one Lignerolles. He was but a Gentleman of the Chamber—no inconsiderable position in those days—but thought as much of himself as any Captain of Horse or Chevalier of the Order.

When it came to distributing the costumes, and they gave him only the plainest kind, he refused altogether to wear anything of the sort, saying he deserved quite as fine and rich a one as certain others who had them, notably the Seigneurs de Montsalés and d'Autefort, who were dressed in the richest style, considering himself quite their equal. And on that account he

¹ Apropos of costume at this period, an interesting little sketch is given by Brantome elsewhere. In the first Civil Wars (1562-3), in the attack on the suburbs of Orleans, the late M. de Guise ordered the French to attack on one side and the Spaniards on the other. In command of the Spanish regiment was a young soldier of the name of Mendoza, who attracted universal attention by his figure and grace and style, and the magnificence of his arms, his arquebus and dress. He wore a jacket of yellow satin, covered with silver embroidery, bands and leggings of the same, a hat of black silk (taffetas), with a cluster of yellow plumes (*Rodomontades Espagnoles*, 347).

declined to ride in the procession with Monsieur his master.

Afterwards Montsalés—another of the “haughty and high-headed aristocrats” we wot of—heard of this, and one morning, on the way to Monsieur’s levee, accosted Lignerolles as he met him in the *place* at Bayonne.

There ensued what we may venture to classify as a “duel of words,” a thing dimly significant of the manners and the social ambitions of the time.

“Lignerolles,” said Montsalés, “did you say that?”—meaning what we have just been told.

“Yes,” says Lignerolles, “and what I say I stand by.”

“Ha ! Mort Dieu !” says Montsalés, “you compare yourself to me.”

“If I do,” says Lignerolles (at this point clearly losing control of his temper), “I should do you as much honour as I should wrong to myself.”

Montsalés, having so early exhausted the whole gamut of imprecation, could only gasp out a still more emphatic “Mort Dieu !” adding the Parthian after-shot, “you served with Bueil.” Now this Bueil was the brave bastard of Sancerre.¹

“Yes, and I am proud of it,” said the other—“a brave and valiant leader under whom I fought and bled for my King, yes, and learnt much. I have followed others in Piedmont of less quality than him—gallant captains, too—with arquebus and pike. I don’t know under whom you served your apprenticeship.”

“Mort Dieu !” broke in Montsalés, “*I have honours you have not*”—meaning the Order (of the Holy Spirit)

¹ Descendant of the famous Comte de Sancerre, *le fléau des Anglais*, who helped Joan of Arc to recover Orleans in 1428.

and the Company of Horse led by M. d'Annebaut, who was killed at Dreux.

"If you have," was the cool answer, "take care of your honours. You can't well do without them. As to me, my only disadvantage is that I haven't got them yet, though I deserve them quite as well. But a year or two ago you were only the ensign to M. the Marshal de St. André, as I am to M. de Nemours, and proud of it, too. And if advancement has come to you first by a little, it will come to me soon enough."

Most fortunately at this moment Brantome himself and the Baron de Vantenat arrived on the scene and prevented the affray which otherwise would certainly have taken place, in spite of the stringent prohibitions of any kind of violence or disorder on such a special occasion.

The King heard all about it, and commanded that paragon of virtues, "M. the Constable," to make all straight between the parties.

And we have his authority for the verdict that Lignerolles had rather the best of this particular combat. So skilfully, it was thought, had he "brought out his own merits" (*démeslé ses comparaisons*) "like a man who could speak as well as act."

There is certainly a democratic independence about his line of self-defence, whereas Montsalès presents rather the appearance of a hide-bound aristocrat bursting with pride and profanity.

The other of the two insulted parties, M. d'Autefort, sought his revenge in a more practical fashion. He challenged Lignerolles to meet him outside the town. Gastine, lieutenant of the M. de Longueville, and Nanzay, afterwards Captain of the Guard, were the seconds.

The parties met; they were observed to confer together, as also did the seconds. What happened no

one knew precisely, but the principals were afterwards observed, amid general disappointment, to walk off the ground together in a very friendly manner.

A scandal we are sorry to have to report, for on these occasions people ought—they really ought—to “conquer or die,” after the orthodox Neapolitan fashion, otherwise, ill-feeling is caused among the spectators.

You could not say, however, that the feeling was confined to them. Thus there was an example of this on the occasion when M. de Sourdiac, known as the young Chasteauneuf of the House of Rieux in Brittany, challenged La Chesnaye-Raillé of Anjou, and they met in the Isle de Louviers at Paris.

De Sourdiac, it seems, had had a lawsuit with the other, who had been his guardian (and was the uncle of his newly-married wife), but we know that legal process was not then considered the most expeditious manner of obtaining justice.

He believed that La Chesnaye had made certain remarks about him, hence the affair on the island.¹

When they met De Sourdiac simply asked—

“Did you use those expressions?” to which La Chesnaye-Raillé answered—

¹ The duel is assigned by Brantome to “the reign of our late sovereign Henry II.” (1547–59), perhaps a slip for Henry III., as it appears to have taken place on March 31, 1579.

Duchat also cites a reference to La Chesnaye-Raillé from d'Aubigné's *Confession Catholique au Sieur de Sancy*, one of the scandalous pamphlets collected in the celebrated *Recueil de diverses pièces serv. à l'hist. de Henry III.*, to 1663 (and frequently reprinted), bk. ii. 1. It need hardly be said that the inner history of half the quarrel, described by Brantome could only be traced in this umbrageous and satirical light literature of the time, a mere glance into which is enough to stamp the age as probably the most shameless in French history.

"On my word and honour as a gentleman I did not."

"Then I am satisfied."

"Are you?" says the other; "well, *I am not*; and, as you have given me all the trouble of coming here, I mean to fight. Besides, think of all these people assembled on both sides of the river: what will they say of us if we meet like this, only to talk, and not to fight? We shall be disgraced."

This argument was irresistible, and they fought with sword and dagger, and exchanged many blows. The comedy soon became a tragedy.

Some said (here again see the crying scandal of these irregular contests) that De Sourdiac was wearing armour! It was even alleged that La Chesnaye was heard to cry out after a stiff lunge at his body, "Ah! you young scoundrel, you've got more on than I have, or I should have had you that time!"

Then he played at his adversary's head and neck, getting in one thrust that was within an ace of cutting his throat. Sourdiac, however, was not a bit put out by that, and presently ran his man through the body and killed him.

As described and "moralised" by Brantome it is a pretty and characteristic scene.

One does not like to make unkind reflections, or positively to say that the young man, an intimate friend of our own, really *did* wear some surreptitious form of defence. That would seem rather discreditable for so brave and so capable a young fellow. As to the ex-guardian, who paid so dearly for a careless observation, or his own foolish vanity, De Sourdiac was good enough to use very kind expressions about him, some time after the combat "swearing he had never seen so stout and spirited a gentleman" as indeed he (La Chesnaye-Raillé) had shown himself in those wars of which we hear so much.

We are assured that he was eighty years old—there seems no reason to doubt the text—and thus “finished a worthy life by a worthy demise,” being especially admirable for his refusal to leave the ground without fighting, or to “amuse himself with words.”

Well, one can only hope he found more amusement in the *grande estoquade au corps* which ended all.

“It is a shame,” the narrator prattles on, identifying himself for the moment with the spectators on both banks of the river, “when gentlemen meet and content themselves with mere words of apology, without once crossing swords.”

But it would rather seem that he means, if anything, that indoors, or on a campaign or at Court, an apology or explanation is all very well, but that if you get so far as to meet an antagonist on “the ground” you ought not to go back and let the whole affair end in a few minutes’ conversation.

Montsalés and Lignerolles (to go back to them) were really extremely fine fellows. One was killed at the battle of Jarnac, the other was assassinated at Bourgueil, in Anjou, by a little party of seven, the “principal” being the young Ville-Clair—“with him,” as lawyers say, the Counts Montafier, Charles de Mamffol, and Saint Jehan de Lorges, and three others, who, by the way, all of them finished in the same fashion, and were done to death like the great man who was the author and abettor of it all.

“To tell us all about it would be too long a story,” says the unscrupulous Brantome, for whom mere length could never be a deterrent.

From an interesting footnote of Ducbat’s, one gathers what we may take to be the true inwardness of the matter. Henry III. (when Duke of Anjou) had confided



CHARLES IX., AFTER FRANÇOIS CLOUET.

From Niel : *Portraits des Personnages Illustres.*

[To face p. 194.]

to the unfortunate Lignerolles a plot formed by the Court for getting rid of the Huguenot leaders "in a certain manner," though, alas! there was little variety about the manner of these political manœuvres. This particular plot, however, was not put into execution. Meanwhile Lignerolles had incautiously confided his knowledge to Charles IX., and that monarch, whom legend represents as firing at the Huguenots with an arquebus out of his palace window, instigated the Duke to get rid of him, for fear he should "babble" to eminent Protestants of what was brewing against them.

Among the various classes of persons whom it was necessary to kill in this curious age, it is clear that *accomplices in an abortive conspiracy* or abandoned plot would occupy a prominent rank.

Brantome, however, who is only thinking of the particular "tricks of the trade" by which their extinction was secured, labours to assure us again (though we know better from his own evidence) that fraud and treachery were always punished in kind, because "the good God *has given us a sword to our side*"—this is amateur theology with a vengeance!—"that we may use it properly, not abuse it."

Every effort, then, should be made to settle these differences and get rid of disagreeable people by means of the formal duel, and not of the irregular, but often, alas! more expeditious assassination. In fact, an eminent divine had avowed to our author that though both crimes were offences to the Divine judgment, the assassination by treachery or ambushade was among unforgiveable sins. It was so even in the eyes of great judges and senators of the Court, and often severely punished as such.

Apropos, we may say, chiefly of the manners of "The

Great," the scene here changes to the battlefield of Ravenna (1512); time, early morning.¹

As M. de Nemours and the Chevalier Bayard were riding with a small company—La Palice, d'Allegre, Lautrec, and others—along the banks of a canal, the young Duke observed, "M. Bayard we are a capital mark here for the arquebusiers, if there happened to be any hidden behind those hedges." They then noticed a troop of some twenty or thirty horse, among whom was Don Pedro de Pas, coming towards them on a reconnaissance.

Bayard rode forward a few paces and saluted them, saying, "Gentlemen, you are preparing, like us, for the great game to begin. Have the goodness not to fire on your side and we will not on ours." Which was agreed. Then Don Pedro asked him who he was, and hearing that it was the famous Bayard who had left so great a renown in the kingdom of Naples, he expressed his delight. He had not known of his presence, and while regarding it as equivalent to "a reinforcement of 2,000 men," he was heartily glad to see him there, safe and sound. He had heard that M. Bayard had fallen at the retaking of Brescia, and was thankful to learn the news was not true. He wished there could be peace between their respective sovereigns, that they might enjoy each other's society as good friends and companions in arms.

The Chevalier was, of course, not behindhand in politeness.

Then they inquired of him—looking at M. de Nemours—who was this young gentleman so superbly

¹ In 1512 the French, under Gaston de Foix, Duc de Nemours (1489-1513), nephew of Louis XII., and the Chevalier Bayard, took Brescia by storm, and with the aid of 5,000 German mercenaries, destroyed the united Spanish and Papal armies at Ravenna.

dressed, to whom every one seemed to pay such reverence. For he was in full armour—except for his helmet—the whole simply covered with gold (*tant dorées que rien plus*), and bearing a coat-of-arms in rough cloth of gold and the Foix arms in raised embroidery upon it of the same material, which with his handsome face and youthful appearance—he was about twenty-five—rendered him a natural object of attention.

Bayard introduced the young Duke as “M. de Nemours, our general, nephew of His Majesty and brother of the Queen.”

Instantly all the party dismounted, and Don Pedro, bareheaded, addressed M. de Nemours, saying, “My Lord, save as concerns the honour of Spain, all of us here are the humble servants of your Highness.”

M. de Nemours having thanked them with the profusest courtesy, added, “Gentlemen, we shall see this day to whom the field is to belong, to you or to us; but not without great loss of blood will this affair be settled. Now to avoid that, if your viceroy will consent to settle this difference, man to man in combat with me, I undertake that all my friends and comrades here will consent, and, if I fall, will return into the Duchy of Milan, leaving you in peace, if you, in the contrary event, will agree to retire to Naples.”

To which the Marquis de Pescayre promptly replied that he had no doubt of the sincerity of the Prince’s offer, but disapproved the idea of his viceroy trusting so much to his own personal prowess, and officers of his army would prevent it.

“Very well, then,” said Nemours. “Adieu. I cross the water and promise never to return till the battle is ours or yours.” So they parted.

And the gorgeous armour with the De Foix insignia

was, we know, dabbled with its young wearer's life-blood before the close of the day.

The point, however, is that "the captains" on his side also objected on the two grounds (to cut their oration short) of the danger to the whole States of Milan and of the King's probable displeasure.

They had no doubt at all that their gallant champion would "soon make amend of the viceroy," but feared that every one would be shocked to hear that the nephew of the greatest king on earth had fought with a mere vassal of his honoured sister the Queen of Spain, who would certainly at once disavow him for her brother when she heard of it. Such were the conventions, the difficulties in these cases.

Talking of De Foix, in the reign of Philip le Bel, those affectionate brothers-in-law the Counts d'Armagnac and De Foix, who were perpetually quarrelling, as all readers of Froissart are aware, formally defied each other and appointed a meeting at Gisors, under the patronage of the monarch aforesaid.

Also after the battle of Agincourt, when a d'Armagnac had been made Constable of France, there was another family affair of the kind, but various noble friends and captains prevented it ever coming to a head.

Again, "at the beginning of the Wars of the League," the King of Navarre showed a certain disposition to fight—he and his cousin the Prince de Condé—against M. de Guise and M. du Maine, but the King (Charles IX.) prevented it. Otherwise, no doubt, there would have been bloodshed.

There was a rumour, again, in Francis II.'s time, that the aforesaid King of Navarre, jealous of not holding a position near enough to His Majesty's person, challenged the Duc de Guise, taking Condé for his second.

Guise would have accepted the challenge, and had chosen for second his young brother, M. le Grand Prieur de France ; and if they had fought there is no sort of doubt the combat would have been furious !

In the history of duels which might have occurred (but never did!), the preliminaries, especially in high life, must be recognised as worthy to be considered a "little digression."

It was when Francis II. held a great assembly of nobles and military men at St. Germain to advise on the affairs of his realm "which were beginning to trouble him."

Among the assembled celebrities was the famous Montluc, whose strictures on La Chastaigneraye have already caused us so much regret.

This gentleman, commonly known as "le Boucher Royaliste," discoursing in his free and casual fashion to M. de Guise, happened to mention the King of Navarre, saying how he had met him at Nérac. King Henry having shown much annoyance at M. de Guise occupying the place which by rights belonged to him, he (Montluc) had advised him to make his dissatisfaction known in the right quarter, and in fact call the Duke to account, and settle the matter, man to man, feeling sure that one so brave as the Duke could never refuse.

The scene is one worthy of the pen of "Ouida" or Miss Lawrence.

The great Guise, in his most chilly manner, replied : "Montluc, do you make these observations by the authority and request of the King of Navarre, or do you take upon you to say them of yourself?"

"My lord," says the other, "I speak on my own account, as I see that the kingdom is kept in a state of turmoil through your private factions, and I am so confident in your lordship's bravery that when King

Henry makes you so fair an offer, you will surely accept it and thus *leave the country in peace by the death of one or the other of you, or both.*"

This was plain speaking. It rouses us to the fact that a little more duelling in the highest social circles might have meant the extinction of it elsewhere.

The Duc de Guise, however, could not be expected to see that. Boiling with suppressed passion, "Mont-luc," he answered, "you are become a great politician since we last met. I wonder the King does not make you his chancellor for the skill you show in arranging private affairs of this kind. Or perhaps you fancy yourself still in Piedmont, among your infantry, whom you are used to set fighting as and when the fancy takes you. Have the goodness to remember that Navarre and Guise are not quite of your kidney. His Majesty and I are old friends. I am sufficiently aware of his personal bravery, and he knows something of mine. Whenever he thinks fit to communicate with me I will give myself the pleasure of replying. Meanwhile perhaps you will occupy yourself with your own affairs."

"Who was astounded then," we read, "was Mont-luc," and profuse in his apologies, which, after a decent interval, were well received. For of course M. de Guise had really a great regard for him.

Brantome himself heard the story next morning, when the great warrior was observed to look very crestfallen, with nothing like his usual haughty self-possession. For M. de Guise, apart from the great power and favour he wielded then, had that imposing *je-ne-sais quoi* which is apt to make another man feel very small.

Moral: Do not interfere lightly with the affairs of the great; nor (one might add) address to them historical reflections only adapted to posterity.

It was well known at Court that when the Prince de Condé, on the establishment of his innocence, came out of prison at Orleans,¹ he also wanted to challenge the aforesaid Duke of Guise. But the Queen mother prudently hushed up that affair, or the scandal would have been something terrible.

And as to the "affairs" of the great, to jump back to the Middle Ages, when Charles I., King of Naples,² and Alfonso of Aragon had their great quarrel about the kingdom of Sicily, and appointments were made, by the agreement of the parties and the ordinance of the Pope, for a combat to take place close by Bordeaux then held by the King of England who gave his permission and expressed his readiness to be judge, a word more is to be said.

The point illustrated in the case is one of such importance that we are amazed at its never having been discussed before. It is no less than the vital question, If two duellists made an appointment for a certain day or hour, *how long was one bound to wait for the other?* In other words, How soon might he leave the field without incurring the charge of cowardice and evasion? One can imagine the problem discussed to an infinity of questions and "quodlibets" by Thomas Aquinas, or some other early theologian.

¹ Louis I., Prince de Condé (1532-1569) compromised in the conspiracy of Amboise, and condemned to death, was released on the death of Francis II. (1562).

² Charles I. of Anjou, King of the two Sicilies and son of Louis VIII., whom he followed to the Crusade, sharing his imprisonment at Damietta. He conquered Naples, which had been presented to him by the Pope, in 1264. The unpopularity of his rule brought about the Sicilian Vespers (1282) when all the French in Sicily were slaughtered. Charles retained the kingdom of Naples, and died in 1285.

What happened, however, was this : Charles, "like a brave Frenchman," hurried across Italy and France, with the forces, and according to the conditions agreed upon, that he might put in an appearance "early in the morning" of the appointed day, as he did, and prepared to wait for him till evening.

But no enemy appeared. It was growing late. He sent messengers in all directions, but could hear no news of him, and so finally retired by the way he came.

Meanwhile Alfonso (note the difference) "that prudent and crafty Spaniard" had carefully arranged a system of transport and relays of post-horses—all in profound secrecy, so that no one knew anything of it—in order to enable him to arrive on the scene just an hour before sunset. It was then summer-time.

This object he achieved with precision, and finding no enemy in the lists (we can imagine the feelings of the spectators if there were any), swaggered about and boasted in the Spanish style, caused his "appearance" to be formally recorded, and then, having watched the sun sink below the horizon, went home again.

This was thought a rather mean proceeding by some people. Others—shall we be surprised to hear?—argued that it was all perfectly correct, and that as he had appeared during the day-time and *before* nightfall, there was nothing more to be said ; except perhaps what the learned Duchat adds in a footnote that if his antagonist had only had a little more patience he would have been completely sold.

In another case recorded in the Chronicles of Naples Robert, the grandson of the aforesaid monarch,¹ when

¹ Robert, third son of Charles II., defended Genoa against the Ghibelline party under Gian Maria (?) Visconti, and died 1343.

Apropos of the *time* question here raised, and also of the

besieged in Genoa by Maria Visconti, of Milan, and challenged by that noble lord, declined to fight him on the ground of their inequality in rank, though, when defied by his equal, King Frederick of Sicily, he was ready enough to fight had not the Pope interposed and excommunicated the latter.

Here we are confronted by another question.

The duellist's soul—*il y va de l'âme*: we have hitherto been concerned only with his body—was it not likely to be damaged by fighting—nay, even by conversing—with an excommunicated antagonist? At any rate such a conclusion of the affair we are to regard as more honourable than the one effected by King Alfonso. It is to be noted, too, that the Pope (John XXII.) if he acted against the spiritual interests of the said King Frederick, “did quite as much” for his material safety in defending him from such a redoubtable champion as King Robert, whose prowess had been abundantly displayed both elsewhere and at the aforesaid siege of Genoa, where, being shut up for

restrictions imposed on duelling by the rank or office of the parties, an interesting anecdote is to be found in the romantic memoirs of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1581–1648).

Passing through the Inner Temple one day he encountered Sir Robert Vaughan, and they had some “harsh” words. Sir Robert sent a challenge by one Charles Price, to whom Lord Herbert duly gave the length of his sword, and repaired next day with his brother to an appointed spot not far from the waterside near Chelsea.

Sir Robert, however, never appeared, nor could any one succeed in bringing him on to the ground, so the Herberts (more prudent than the King of the Sicilies) *waited till an hour after sunset*.

Next day Lord Herbert received a mandate from his sovereign, by the hands of the Earl of Worcester, to the effect that, being now made ambassador, he must not entertain private quarrels; and the affair was settled, not without some danger to Lord Herbert of losing his place (*Memoirs*, ed. 1824, p. 180).

some seven or eight months, he used to appear every day in person on the walls and constantly perform prodigies of valour in keeping off the enemy, whom, by the way, on getting out, he afterwards defeated at Savona.

Such a champion might well have given Frederick "a good fright" if they had ever met, apart from the fact that, being a gentleman of great piety and devotion, he would have had the Divine aid on his side, which—excommunication apart—seems hardly fair. Besides, he was one of the noblest blood of France, never likely to play false on such occasions. It is this brave Robert, moreover, to clinch the matter, who was grandmother of that famous Queen Joan, the wonder of her age, of whom Brantome reminds us he has written at length elsewhere.

In more modern times, of course, the example *par excellence* of a combat between two of "the great" was that of Francis I. and Charles V.¹ That would have

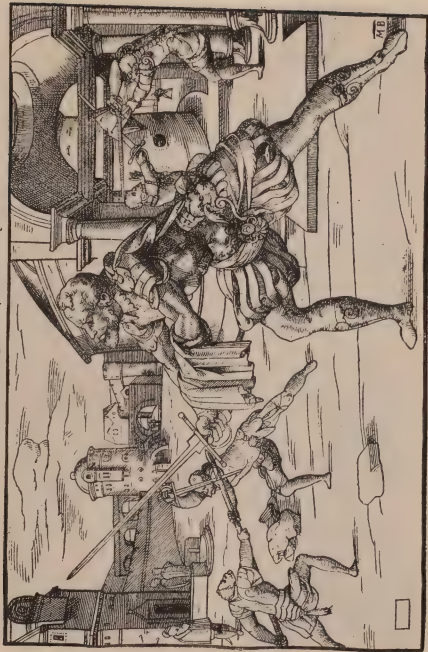
¹ This challenge marked the crisis of a complex negotiation.

Francis I. having been captured in the ill-advised and disastrous battle of Pavia (Feb. 25, 1525), had thereupon written the famous letter to his mother which concluded with the expression, "Nothing is left to me but honour and my life," subsequently abbreviated into the popular and more heroic apophthegm, "All is lost but honour." Fournier's amusing monograph gives the text of the letter true, "*De toutes choses ne m'est demouré que l'honneur et la vie qui est saulve*"—no inconsiderable addition (*Espr. d. l'Hist.*).

The exact veracity of the reflection, even in its authentic form, is, as Brantome might say, open to a good deal of discussion.

An exquisitely serio-comic negotiation followed, the Emperor affecting deep distress at the capture of a king "an incident which every one must regret," and at the same time pressing demands scarcely more generous than those addressed by Bismarck to Napoleon III.

Francis at one moment (Nov., 1525) came near to resigning the



FENCING WITH SWORD AND CLOAK.

From Joachim Meyer : *Kunst des Fechtens*.

been a contest to which all Europe might have contributed spectators.

It seems a pity that after so many preliminary overtures, and the exchange of all kinds of taunts and insults, it never came off, owing to the difficulty of agreeing about the place and the choice of arms.

The Emperor, we read, contended that the choice of place belonged to him, and suggested—in a full assembly of the Holy College, before the Pope and numerous ambassadors, including those of the King—that, as there was a difficulty, the best thing would be for them to fight on an island, or a good-sized boat, or a bridge, either with sword and dagger or (sword and) cloak. In these words this “master of men” was by way of asserting what he conceived to be his rights.

King Francis, however, equally careful of his own, which he claimed as the provoked and defending party,

French Crown to the Dauphin, but to this resolution, which would at least have left *honneur sauve*, he could not adhere.

Finally he subscribed a disastrous treaty, practically abandoning (Jan., 1526) all French rights in Italy and Burgundy, and the suzerainty of Flanders and Artois, but at the same time making a useful “secret protest” against the moral violence to which he was subjected.

Upon this King Francis—life, honour and all—was set free (his two sons being accepted as hostages for the execution of the treaty), and exclaimed with *insouciant* enthusiasm, when first his horse’s feet touched the soil of France, “I am still a king.”

An early assembly of Notables, however, decided that his latest acts in that capacity must be repudiated; and Burgundy declined on its own account to be anything but French.

The Emperor complained indignantly of this breach of faith. His ambassadors came to Paris to discuss the matter, and were met by the King’s singular proposal to fight it out in the lists.

The challenge, not the least famous of the few Royal cartels known to history, is here given *verbatim* from the text of Du Bellay’s *Memoirs*.

“We Francis, by the Grace of God King of France, and Lord of Genoa, to you Charles by the same Grace Emperor elect of

expressed a preference for fighting on horseback, and, as befitted a great king, in full armour with a good lance and sword.

As to the place, no decision seems ever to have been arrived at.

Hence his absolute refusal to receive or listen to the herald of the Emperor until this point was settled and his personal security for the occasion (a point already illustrated) fully guaranteed. Sword and dagger, moreover, he thought arms too common and popular for the use of great potentates, who, when they went to war or combat, went properly armed and mounted, not like miserable foot-soldiers and mercenaries, who fought *with nothing on* (*tous desarmez*).

That seemed the orthodox contention, according to the old-fashioned authorities, who will always have you fight in a civilised fashion, with the body decently covered, and not like brute beasts.

Rome and Lord of the Spains, have you to know that being informed how, in the answers made to our Ambassadors and heralds sent to you in the cause of Peace, you have by way of unjustly defending yourself, accused us in saying that you had our word of honour (*notre foy*), and that contrary to our promise we have departed and passed out of your hands and power.

"To defend our honour which in this case would suffer from the charge of untruth, we have determined to send you this cartel by which (although no prisoner who is guarded can be considered bound by parole, and that fact alone would be sufficient excuse), still wishing to satisfy every one, and to clear our honour (which we trust with God's good pleasure to preserve untarnished till death), we will you to understand, that if you have wished or wish to accuse us—not only in the matter of our deliverance and parole, but in any other—of having ever done any such act such as an honourable gentleman should not do, we say that you have lied in your throat and will lie every time you say it, determined as we are to defend our honour to the very term of our life. Wherefore seeing you have chosen to accuse us against all truth, write us nothing more, but secure to us a fair field (*nous assurez le camp*), and we will bring the arms, protesting that if, after this declaration of ours, you

The Emperor, on the other hand, contended that the sword was as fine and honourable a weapon as could be seen, that it was carried as a badge of honour, and was, in fact, "a faithful and useful companion" both in peace—such peace as was known in his day—and war, and patronised from time immemorial by kings, princes, and captains of the very highest rank.

On these differences, anyhow, the matter dropped.

An experienced Spanish captain, with whom Brantome had discussed the matter in Sicily, thought it would have been much finer if the two monarchs had advanced as to a general engagement, and then, halting their forces, defied each other and joined in single combat like Turnus and Æneas.

He (the Spanish captain) thought there was a

write or say in other places words contrary to our honour that the shame of avoiding the combat will be yours, seeing that the acceptance of it is the end of all writings.

"Done in our good town and City of Paris, the 25th day of March the year 1527 before Easter and signed FRANCIS."

Charles's ambassador declined to undertake the responsibility of reading or presenting this singular document. But Francis said that was all one, and he would send it by a herald of his own. Meanwhile the secretary, Jean Robertet, read it aloud.

It is painful to remark (a point which bears upon the punctilios as discussed in our text) the emphatic way in which the King denies that a prisoner "lying wounded in bed and guarded by five hundred arquebusiers" could possibly be held bound by his word even when "honour" was so much to him.

As to the hold the Emperor still had over him through the captivity of his children, he could only recognise, lament it, and endeavour to recover them.

"Everybody knows I am their father," he retorts, and even if they were not, he would make every effort. Indeed, he had already made offers—such offers!—of ransom, and all for the good cause of peace—"preposterous sums, *four times as much as ever was asked for any of his ancestors by the unbelievers.*" But a rise in the price during the lapse of three or four centuries was surely to be expected.

splendid opportunity for this during the expedition into Provence, only some two or three months after the outrages committed by Charles's forces at Rome (1527), but that the King (Francis) had shown no eagerness to take advantage of it. Brantome replied that, on the contrary, as soon as he heard of Charles's order for the accumulation of provisions for a week, he had prepared to repel an attack on his position, and very possibly contemplated a single combat.

The question, perhaps, is now beyond solution, but all the Spanish critic could answer finally was that the Emperor was then a very young man, *not nearly as old as the King* (he was thirty-seven and Francis forty-two), and would in time have shown as great personal prowess as he.

There were certain dangers even when two sovereigns met in full publicity and with the clearest understandings. Thus when those desperate enemies Philip Augustus and Richard, commonly styled Cœur de Lion, King of England, negotiated a truce at Guet d'Amours (a pretty name) and had halted their armies all ready to fight, a bow-shot apart from one another (their majesties met somewhere between Bourg-Dieu and Château-Roux), a miraculous thing occurred ; for suddenly a great serpent (supposed to have been the Evil One in disguise—but this, we are assured, is a mistake), emerged from an old tree trunk and hissed in a threatening manner at the two monarchs, who accordingly drew their swords and unsuccessfully attempted to kill the beast.

This naturally caused wild excitement among the opposing armies, who instantly began to engage, but were restrained in time, so that the negotiation was happily concluded and the parties returned in perfect

amity together and rendered thanks to God in the abbey close by.

We have been reminded that in the case of a great man suspected of a crime the private machinery of the duel was often more effective than a Crown prosecution.

The two were combined, for example, in the case where the *Sieur. de Langeay*,¹ the King's lieutenant-general in Piedmont, persisted in accusing the *Marquis del Govast*, the Emperor's lieutenant-general in Milan, of the murder of *Cesare Fregoso* (one of the famous Genoese family) and of one *Rincon*, and demanded to prove it on his person and in single combat. As the *Marquis* made a difficulty, *Du Bellay* tried to summon him before the Imperial Chamber and get satisfaction by that means for a crime which, as it involved a violation of the privilege of an ambassador, deeply concerned all Christendom.

Brantome had heard the story from the *Cardinal du Bellay*, who discoursed "like a book" about it. And the *Sieur. de Langeay* died, as it happened, and unsatisfied, in his conviction—to the no small relief of the *Marquis*, who was universally believed to be guilty, if not the actual principal in the crime.²

¹ *Guillaume du Bellay, Sieur. de Langeay*, general, diplomatist, and litterateur (1491-1542), author, like his brother *Martin*, of valuable memoirs of the time, published together, fol., 1571.

² The story is told more fully in the life of this hero (*Capitaines Estrangers*, Disc. 13). *Alfonso d'Avalos, Marquis de Govast* (1502-1546) *Brantome's* cousin, and nephew of the *Marquis de Pescayre*, became on his uncle's death chief commander of the forces of *Charles V.*, and governor of the Milanese. He defeated *Solyman the Great*, and forced *Barbarossa* to raise the siege of *Nice*, and was conquered by the *Duc d'Enghien* at *Cerisoles* (1544). This disaster was, "perhaps," a Divine retribution for his crime, about which there seems to have been no sort of doubt, though *Brantome* calls it a "fine mystery." He had visited the "little island on the *Ticino*, about three miles from *Pavia*," where the

Sometimes, of course, the mere challenge had the effect of a modern order of Court. For example, when the Constable of Castille at l'ontarabia made all that delay and difficulty and tried, in fact, to play the sharper (*faisoit du renard*) about the delivery and surrender of the Royal children,¹ Montmorency had merely to send the Comte de la Guiche to say to the said Constable that "he was waiting for him with a good sword" unless the promised conditions were at once complied with, and the business was done at once.

In the catalogue of other persons of quality who would have liked to fight each other (a normal condition of mind during this period) but, for various reasons, never did, we cannot pretend to find much interest, but it may be noted that among the causes which prevented these meetings might be the possession of "the Order of the King."

Properly speaking, members of this body could never fight without the permission of their superior—that is to say, His Majesty, as the aforesaid De Langeay once pointed out to Cesare Fregoso when the latter challenged

boatmen openly showed you the spot on which the two gentlemen (the King's ambassadors to Venice and the Levant) had been "done to death and buried by order" of our author's respected relative. The Marquis was a great "ladies' man" (Dameret), and went about splendidly dressed, and perfumed, *even to his horse's saddle*. He had promised the fair ladies of Milan to bring back the Prince (d'Enghien) and present him to them as a prisoner, and was said to have prepared "two waggonloads of handcuffs" to chain the poor French prisoners, who were all to be sent to the galleys. As it happened, however, he himself was taken by the French and treated with every courtesy.

¹ In 1530. They had been delivered by Francis I. as hostages for the performance of the treaty of Madrid (1526). See note p. 204.

Gaguin de Gonzaga, both being Chevaliers of the Order. In that case Fregoso excused his action by saying he had never read the chapters (regulations) of the said Order, and Gaguin by the plea that he was the challenged party and must respond.

A Knight of the Order could always decline to fight any one who was not so distinguished, just as Ludovico de Birague did to Scipio Vimerquat. The whole subject was discussed in a little treatise published by the latter, and a very creditable production, Brantome thought, for a military man.

In contrast, however, to these sticklers for their privileges there have been plenty of distinguished people who would be quite ready to oblige you by “tearing the Order from their necks” or waiving for the moment all their ranks, dignities, and distinctions, if you were bent on trying the length of their swords.

For example, there was that great warrior the late Claude de Lorraine, Duke of Guise, who offered to doff ranks, titles, and distinctions in order to give satisfaction to the Comte de Sancerre, who said, if Guise would so far oblige him, “he had two trusty swords, one at the King’s service the other for the Duke’s.”

In this affair came out the discovery of a most interesting plot. It concerned—though Brantome seems to forget he has not told us this—the siege of a place called Saint-Dizier, then held by the Comte de Sancerre.

Granville, the famous Minister of Charles V., had, it seems, contrived to seize a packet containing the key to the cypher in which Guise and Sancerre were in the habit of corresponding, and thereupon

forged a letter in Guise's name saying that the King, knowing the dearth of powder and provisions in the place, recommended the Count to make the best terms he could to secure the lives of his army, as the King could not come to their assistance. This letter was written in cypher and handed to a French tambour who had been sent to the Imperial camp for the recovery of certain prisoners, by some suborned individual unknown to him, who said he was charged from the Duke of Guise to deliver it in secrecy to Sancerre. A fine device truly !

However, having no clue to the spuriousness of the letter, he (the Count) had surrendered, relying on the word of M. de Guise.

But on their meeting for the purpose of the duel, the whole truth was discovered—to the reader's keen disappointment ; and so this also is to be numbered among the duels which might have been, the facts merely throwing light on the generosity of a great nobleman who refused to shield himself behind his rank and grandeur.

Similarly, at the beginning of Charles IX.'s reign, the Baron de la Garde, when he quarrelled with the elder M. de Molé, was quite willing to waive his Order in order to fight him in Paris. Brantome saw them both.

He had heard, too, that the question was once put to Don Ferdinand de Gonzaga, whether a Chevalier of the Order might or could engage with one who was not of the Order without bringing a slur upon it, on which he answered publicly that being as he was prince, duke, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Governor of Milan, and the Emperor's lieutenant-general in Italy, still if he had an affair of honour with Piero Strozzi (that was

when he was besieging Parma, and Strozzi in that city) he would never dream of declining to fight such a man, though he had neither the Order nor the other honours which he subsequently earned by his virtues and prowess.

Strozzi, however, was a knight *without* the Order, "well worth a round dozen of those who have it."

And we may observe in passing that though the Order was instituted by the Dukes of Savoy and Burgundy, the Kings of France and England, as a reward and a distinction of the highest honour, as the Burgundian motto says, "*pretium non vile laborum*" (no light recompense for toil), and though they were of old time carefully respected and religiously given only to deserving persons, this strictness has so relaxed of late, even in France, that, through the harm done by our Civil Wars and simply for the purpose of getting men's services, the distinction has been distributed right and left till one finds Knights of the Order of St. Michael wherever one goes!

It was in disgust at this that our late pious sovereign Henry III. instituted the Order of the Holy Spirit, which, however, became subsequently as much abused as the other; indeed, was even more commonly distributed to many people, as our author knew, through mere family interest and not for any claim of valour or merit. He remembered one case where it was conferred by one of the King's private secretaries to a man who had simply received him at his house and given him a dinner, although he was quite a youth and had never seen a Royal army in his life nor even a red or white cross except on the back of some priest who was saying Mass, nor had he ever done the slightest feat of arms. So much so that he was called "Mr. Secretary So-and-So's knight."

Of course it would be ridiculous to suppose a

stripling of that sort looking down on other people far superior to him because he—forsooth—possessed “the Order” and they did not!

In fact, there was much absurdity about the pretensions of these pseudo-gallants and their fancied prerogatives of St. Michael and what not.

So on one occasion one of these gentlemen, who was hurrying post-haste to Court to get his “Order,” was met on the way by a fellow who wanted “a word with him”—that is, to pick a quarrel—so he exclaimed, displaying his insignia, “What do you mean? Don’t you see you mustn’t think of attacking me? Don’t you respect the *Order*?” On which the other intimated that he did not care a curse for all the Orders there were, and proceeded to blackguard him in style. And all the wretched man could do was to complain to the King and the “Chapter,” at its first session, for this offence done to the institution.

Our author was acquainted with both the parties.

Very different was the behaviour of the great Guise, the one murdered at Blois, and the famous Bussy. Once when they were out hunting with Henry III. (the year he came back from Poland) and all his Court, Guise, having a little matter against Bussy, who, by the way, was just back from the siege of Lusignan, where he had been wounded fighting bravely after his fashion, took him aside, and dismissing his own attendant, retired with him (Bussy) right away into the wood (as our author himself observed) without causing a disturbance or giving any idea of a quarrel. There, man to man, he asked him the question which was on his mind. Bussy, however, satisfied him so completely that the great man condescended to reply: “M. de Bussy I am satisfied, but I swear had it been otherwise

we should have fought on this spot, whither I have brought you, like a gentleman, waiving all my princely rights and privileges that raise me above you, to fight fairly and honourably, man to man, *without any treachery, though I could easily have practised it*" (the Italics are our own, not the Duke's). "But as things are, let me assure you I am more your friend than ever."

And Bussy, "never at a lack for an answer, least of all in the matter of challenges," replied, at three times the length, to the effect that he had never suspected his lordship of behaving like a brigand or a cut-throat, that though he would have been proud to fight him, he would first have knelt at his feet and done homage, and if he had come off victorious would have boasted for evermore of "having fought the noblest and bravest prince in Christendom and escaped from his hands."

The rhetorical formulæ, in fact, on which we have touched before, of conciliation, deprecation, and the like were duly observed by both parties, in accordance, we feel sure, with all the best literary precedents of the time.

"M. de Bussy," concluded the Duke last murdered, "I believe every word you say, having the profoundest conviction of your valour and courage. Not a word more of the matter. I am your friend. Let us rejoin the hunt."

"My Lord," says Bussy, "your humble servant."

Each party told the story to Brantome as they rode along; one being a noble personage to whom he was, as we know, deeply attached, the other a relative and intimate friend.

Monsieur, the father of this Duke, that is to say, "the great Guise,"¹ showed a similar condescension to

¹ See Brantome's long and interesting Life of this warrior and hero (*Capitaines Francois*, Disc. 78), whence the story in the text is here taken (*Mem.*, ed. 1787, vol. vi. p. 197).

a certain fashionable captain who had undertaken to kill him and went about boasting of it everywhere. The incident occurred at the battle of Renty, where M. de St. Fal (the one who had the famous quarrel with Bussy, of which more anon) served as his lieutenant.

We are to observe first that Guise himself was never prone to give offence to other people, and, when he did, was quite ready to satisfy them.

St. Fal, however, advanced to the attack too hastily, and likesome injudicious young sportsman, we presume got out of line, on which the Duke, in a rage, went up and struck him over the helmet (*salade*) with his sword, to stop him.

St. Fal was much offended.

"What, my lord! you strike me? That is an insult."

M. de Guise was too busily engaged to reply at the moment. But after the battle, on hearing that the Lieutenant was deeply offended and wished to leave his service, he said—

"Well, well, I'll give him satisfaction," and finding St. Fal in the Royal tent, he addressed him before all the company—

"M. de St. Fal, you are offended, I hear, because I struck you yesterday because you advanced too quickly. Methinks it is better I should have struck you for rushing to the attack too boldly and eagerly, as you did, than for holding back like a coward. So much so that this blow of mine in real truth is far more of an honour to you than a disgrace. And I call all these gentlemen and captains here present to witness that I say so."

This eloquent and graceful apology was received with great admiration, and when the Duke, turning to St. Fal, said, "Well, then let us be as we were," the latter expressed his cordial agreement.

Brantome had the whole story from "the last" of the family, presumably the one murdered in the ante-room at Blois in 1588.

In much the same fashion, when the Court and army—including our author—was on the march to the siege of Bourges, "in the first wars," Anthony, King of Navarre (father of the great Henry), "gave satisfaction" to the late M. de Bellegarde, who told Brantome and his friend, Castelpers, all about it.

But the great example of Royal generosity was Francis I.

He had frequently been warned that Count William of Saxony, who attended his Court, and was in receipt of a pension (an expensive sort of pensioner this!), had determined to kill him.

And what did His Majesty do? He showed no anxiety whatever. But one day, on going out hunting, he chose the best sword in his wardrobe, and took with him the said Count, whom he kept close to his person. Then after following the deer for some time and observing that his escort, all but the Count, were a long way off, he turned aside, and when they were quite alone in the depths of the forest, drew his blade and asked him—

"Do you think this a pretty good sword?"

The Count, handling the point, replied that he had never seen a finer or a sharper one in his life.

"Right you are," said King Francis. "Now, supposing some gentleman had undertaken to compass my death, some one who knew the strength of my arm and the stoutness of my heart, when I have such a good sword as this in my hand, I fancy he would think twice before attacking me.

"Still, if he and I were all alone, I should count him

a considerable coward if he didn't dare to put in hand what he had undertaken to do."

The Count, with an expression of great astonishment, replied, "Sire, the wickedness of such an enterprise would be great, but the folly even greater," a retort, Brantome assures us, well worthy of meditation.

The King, with a laugh, thrust the particularly sharp sword back into its scabbard, and catching the sound of the hunt, which was close by, rode after it. Next morning the Count, seeing that he was discovered and that there was no attacking so brave a monarch, took leave of him on some excuse and went back to his country.

Apropos of the two last stories, our author would like to exclaim with Ariosto on the "splendid generosity of our Kings" to go and bury themselves in woods and forests and be ready to fight there without witnesses, leaving their grandeur to the care of the nymphs and fays!

Henry III., when yet young, though already renowned for his victories at Jarnac and Moncontour,¹ being at Blois on the occasion of the arrangements for the marriage of his sister with the King of Navarre,² was requested by the young Nansay (commonly called Besigny) to secure some favour for him at the hands of the King in Council.

The Duke of Anjou (as he was then) and lieutenant of the King promised he would do what he could, but the Council finding it impossible to grant his request, he was obliged to say so.

Besigny, irritated at the refusal of this favour, and

¹ In 1567 and 1572 respectively.

² It took place in 1572. She was divorced in 1601.



MARGUERITE DE VALOIS, AFTER FRANÇOIS CLOUET.

From Niel : *Portraits des Personnages Illustres*.

[To face p. 218.]

being (like so many others) of an overbearing temper, answered that he (Monsieur) *could easily have got it if he had really wanted*, and that he was not at all like his brother the King, who always kept his promises.

Monsieur, who was sitting at table with His Majesty, replied in great anger—

“Besigny, that’s more than I can stand. If I were as rash a fool as you, and so forgetful of the respect due to my Royal brother, *you should be answered with the point of this dagger*. As it is I have to tell you, you will answer me for this abominable insolence, man to man, to-morrow morning.

“I will put aside my ranks and dignities and summon you to meet me in the forest, and there fight, or otherwise count you a cowardly slanderer, as you are.”

Besigny hadn’t a word to say but “Monsieur, I beg your pardon. I wasn’t thinking what I said. I am your humble servant,” and slunk off. Next morning the Prince sent M. de Vins to challenge him to a duel at some spot in the forest.

He was advised, however, to take post, and go off with M. du Maine on the expedition to the Morea, led by Don John of Austria, where he acquired some reputation.

He was a brave fellow enough, and came back just in time for the siege of Rochelle, where Monsieur received him with as much kindness as ever. Not but that, we are privately assured, a considerable grudge was still felt (for it was rather too much of a mouthful to swallow), though the Prince, on the other hand, was universally praised for his generous offer.

That sort of thing—and mysterious play-acting—is all very well for your “great men.”

Certainly it is off the lines of practical duelling, and leaves the reader disappointed ; whereas, had Monsieur, to use a phrase of Margaret de Valois's,¹ "dagged" the impertinent Besigny at table, there would have ensued materials for a *belle histoire*.

But we must be thankful for such as we can get, even if they amount to little more than lessons in courtly manners.

Thus, not long since there was a ball at Court, and the Seigneur de Givry, an accomplished gentleman of the time, was conducting Mademoiselle de Grammont to dance a valse (volte) with him, when up comes M. de Soissons² and carries off the young lady to dance with him.

Givry, of course, "was obliged to let go," but as he yielded to the Prince, observed, "Monsieur, in this you exercise the privilege of your rank." When the ball was over, and people going home, Givry, who described himself as rather attached to Mademoiselle Grammont, was escorting her home on his arm, when the Comte de Soissons, who had some distinct grudge against him, again appeared and again carried off the young lady.

Upon that Givry exclaimed, "Sir, be so good as to understand I would not endure this from an equal without demanding satisfaction."

The Prince only answered, "Givry, whenever you please, I will waive my grandeur to give you that

¹ See the description of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, about this time, in her immortal *Memoirs*. One may be allowed to cite the irresistibly French comment of her editor (M. Caboche) on some of her literary peculiarities : "D'autres expressions ont disparu avec l'action qu'elles rappellent. On ne dit plus 'Après l'avoir dagué on le jetta par la fenêtre' *grâce à dieu, on ne le ferait pas davantage.*"

² An active warrior and intriguer of the time (1536-1612), youngest son of Louis I., Prince de Condé.

pleasure in the *Pré aux Clercs*, which is open to all the world.”

The other expressed himself much obliged for the honour, and promised to be there whenever he was wanted. But though the conduct of both parties was approved by the world at large, the King interfered, and once more nothing came of it.

That was not quite the case when, in Henry II.'s time, the Prince of Roche-sur-Yon, who was out hunting with the Court, insulted M. d'Andelot¹ both by word and deed.

D'Andelot, who had no more than the usual stock of patience, drew his sword and wounded the Prince. But the Seigneur de Roches, whom Brantome knew afterwards as first groom to Charles IX., came to the aid of his master (who had not ventured himself unprotected, like King Francis or the great Guise), and, in turn, wounded d'Andelot. In fact, the two would have killed one another; but that some of the other gentlemen who were hunting came up—with his Majesty in person—and prevented it.

On this the princes of the blood, feeling that it affected them generally, were indignant and complained to the King.

The Constable, however (Montmorency), stood up for his nephew, d'Andelot, and boldly defended him before the King, the “mutinous” princes and all, saying that if he had done wrong he would be prepared to answer for it, but that he was quite right to assert his own dignity, and that princes must regard their rank and position as “given them by God and nature to be properly used, and not abused.” The finest title they could possess after all was that of

¹ F. de Coligny dit d'Andelot (1511–1569), Protestant leader, younger brother of the famous admiral massacred on St. Bartholomew's Eve.

"Gentlemen"—so much so that that glorious monarch, Francis I., never swore by the honour of king or prince (was this quite so in the little affair at Madrid?), but by "the word of a gentleman"—just as the Spaniards always say, "We poor gentlemen are as good as kings—though short of crowns" (*dineros menos*). One means, of course, "gentlemen" by birth, valour, merit, and military reputation. For that matter d'Andelot was a knight, though not of "the Order"—kighthood was a much more ancient and honourable institution than these new-fangled and fanciful distinctions—and had won honours already in the wars. As to an "Order," why it might be given you as the good Duke Philip (who invented that of the "Golden Fleece") had it conferred on his son—at baptism!

Kighthood, on the other hand, stood above all such ranks, as a religion of honour in which the greatest of kings was no more than a knight, and none could be more. And the virtuous practices prescribed to them by the regulations of their order do but follow honour, or "drag it after them in a triumphal car."

Thus Brantome, in his most *rococo* moralising vein, a little of which, though reinforced by classical precedents, may be said to go a long way.

Perhaps that *was* the reason why Marcellus wanted to build at Syracuse a temple jointly dedicated to Virtue and Honour. The Pontiffs, however, not unnaturally objected, and compelled him to build two separate edifices to these deities, highly honoured of old time, Honour being described on many medals as the Son of Reverence.

Francis I., by whom this deity was, we know, held in special regard, was not content to be a knight of the

Oraer (on occasion of the battle of Marignano), but had himself made a "Knight of Chivalry" by that greatest of knights, Bayard, who himself was only a knight at arms, not of the Order, which he did not receive till afterwards.

King Henry, too, was knighted by the Marshal de Biez, though he had the Order. Which is perhaps enough about "Knights."

In fine, as the Marquis de Pescayre always said, honour in war gained by true valour and noble deeds is worth all that is acquired by intrigue or the favour of princes. The reader will understand, then, that it was with such arguments and deductions, "words to that effect," or possibly by the mere length of the discourse (here considerably abridged) that M. the Constable succeeded in defending the case of his nephew, and secured him a satisfactory post.

Lengthy, however, as the argument may appear, it all had to be rehearsed a second time, and on that occasion to the Constable by the noble Duke of Guise.

In the first Civil War, "when we took Blois from the Huguenots (1562)," the aforesaid M. d'Andelot having been dismissed from his place as colonel of the infantry of France, a fierce quarrel arose between M. de Montbron, third son of the Constable, who had expected to succeed to the post on his cousin's (d'Andelot) retirement, and a certain M. de Randan, to whom the place was in fact given. The Constable himself was so enraged, and the wrangling became so violent, that the worst charges were hurled against the young M. de Randan as a luxurious young *mignon* of the Court who "habitually slept till noonday." Guise himself had to step in and pacify the Constable by pointing out that there was really nothing that

could be said against the conduct of Randan wherever he had been employed, in peace or war, hitherto, and that if he slept till a late hour, that was merely his habit when at Court, whereas when in camp no private soldier could possibly be more wide awake. In fine, that he (Randan) had not at all insulted the complainant's son by calling him out, being in every conceivable respect his equal. If not, he would remind him of what he the (Constable) had said on the occasion of our last anecdote.

Finally the great man, upon due consideration, allowed himself to be appeased, reconciled the two would-be combatants, and expressed regret for some of his own utterances.

On the other hand, of course, it was ridiculous for any conceited commoner presuming on his personal valour or the favour accorded to him by kings or princes, to rashly insult and attack great persons of quality. That was what M. St. Mailgrin did, because the King was rather kind to him, till he became so insolent (possibly with some idea of pleasing his master) as to fly at such high game as the Guises, especially M. du Maine,¹ a remarkable piece of ingratitude, seeing M. de Guise had helped him on and first introduced him on his arrival at Court. He went so far as to use outrageous words one day in the King's ante-chamber, when the King was in his cabinet, and even to draw his sword and cut his glove

¹ C. de Lorraine, Duc de Mayenne (1554-1611) second son of Francois, Duke of Guise, le Balafre; distinguished himself through the Civil Wars, became lieutenant-general of the forces of the Catholic League, and secured from the Parliament (1593) the decree excluding Henry IV. from the crown as a heretic, an intrigue defeated by that monarch's timely conversion.

in two in the middle, saying, after the fashion of scriptural prophets, that thus would he cut up those petty princes.

However, *he did not carry this audacity much further*, for a few days later he was found on the pavement outside the Louvre *blessé à mort*—in this case literally, for he died the next day.

The courtiers, as a rule, approved this conclusion of the episode, but were careful to keep this opinion to themselves, for the King was far from agreeing with them, so far indeed as to attend the funeral and to make it compulsory on the Court too to put in an appearance; in fact, His Majesty showed considerable irritation against those that did not. Ever so many of them went, to Brantome's own knowledge, trying to conceal their satisfaction in a decent disguise of mourning, including some whom he knew to be in the secret and specially advised to behave properly. The King afterwards had St. Malgrin's statue erected in marble, like those of Quélus and Maugiron, and other young persons of whom the less said the better.

But the Parisian mob, thinking this too preposterous a scandal, broke them all up, as has been already observed; in fact, it became a proverbial saying for a long time at Court against the King's favourites, whenever anybody was irritated by them, "I'll have you carved in marble, like the others." Such, then, was the fate of this heady and over-confident youth.

He was not so prudent as the gentleman who quarrelled one day in the hall of the palace with a youth of excitable temper, M. de la Trimouille, called, for some strange reason, "the body of God." The gentleman simply said—

"Sir, you insult me. I am a gentleman of honour.

I swear that *before the year ends* I will have my satisfaction."

La Trimouille answered, "We'll see about that when the time comes."¹

The year rolled by, all but the very last day, and that evening, as he was in the Royal chamber attending the *coucher* of the King, his young friends began to chaff him about his antagonist.

"Ha!" said he, "the year is gone, and not so badly as he predicted. Well, I'm off to bed."

Then he walked out of the palace, only attended by a page, and the gentleman, who was in waiting outside, catching him in a position of disadvantage, stabbed his mantle through two or three times from the back, and observed—

"Monsieur, I could just as well have put those through your body. But I am satisfied to show you I am a gentleman and a man of honour." And, having effected this strange demonstration, he went off.

Of more revengeful temper was the soldier attached to Captain Briagne what time the first "states" were held at Blois (1576).

He had served with Briagne, we are told, and then left him, and the latter, finding him one evening in the ball-room while people were dancing, said to him, with what seems unprovoked incivility—

"Oh, you're there, you scamp, are you? Thank the place for your protection; but rest assured, when I leave it *I'll joint you, and no mistake*" (*vous couperay bras et jambes*), "for daring to leave my service."

The soldier, a man who had some polish about him, answered quietly that he had no idea he was doing Briagne any offence, and was his humble servant.

¹ "*Alors comme alors*" (which perhaps might be rendered, "So long") "*cependant je vous verray venir*."



TRANSFIXING ADVERSARY AFTER ATTEMPTED "MANDRITTO" AT THE LEGS.

From Alfieri: *Arte di maneggiar la Spada*, 1653.

[To face p. 226.

"Servant be damned," says the Captain. "On leaving this hall you die by my hand." It is to be noted that he (the speaker) was mad with rage; even Brantome, as an intimate friend, was obliged to remonstrate and say he ought to accept the poor man's apologies.

At last the soldier, in desperation, retired from the scene, but not so far as to be unable to watch Briagne and spy upon his movements, without losing sight of him for a single instant.

Then, when the ball was over and every one coming out, he followed Briagne till he stopped for a minute, and, seizing the occasion just as La Trimouille's gentleman had done, drew his sword, ran him through the body, and bolted for dear life.

Not only that, but, with great presence of mind, he presented himself at the small gate of the castle, then crowded with people making their way out, and, finding a difficulty, cried aloud, "Ah, gentlemen, for heaven's sake let me pass quickly; my master, look you, has been wounded in the leg, and I must get a surgeon for him."

Tolerable assurance that! However, the people made way for him, and he got off with such expedition that nothing more was ever heard of him, except that he went to the wars in Flanders under M. de la Garde, and served with such distinction that he too was made a captain.

Brantome heard this from a common friend, from whom he received the man's kind remembrances and thanks for having spoken to Briagne so courteously in favour of one whom, in fact, he had never seen before.

Now if we consider, for example, the audacity and resolution of this private soldier, we shall see that, if the great can get rid of the small and obscure, so the latter, especially when their obscurity is assisted by an

attack from the rear, may have their reckoning with the great.

A more curious example occurs in the Chronicles of Savoy, when the Seigneur de Viry, a gentleman of that kingdom who commanded a force of his countrymen at the battle of Tongres against the Liegeois (in 1408), and was afterwards, with his troops, taken into the service of Duke John of Burgundy, became so insolent, and so presumed on his reputation as to attack the good Duke Louis de Bourbon,¹ and send him what used to be called a "defiance," but nowadays a "*deffi solennel*," and that in his own private name, just as princes do.

This, in a simple gentleman, was considered something new, strange, and shocking.

However, simple gentleman or no, he made very effective war upon the Duke, taking castles and places on the frontiers of Brescia and elsewhere, till the good Louis became vexed with his nephew, the Duke of Savoy, whom he supposed to have inspired these attacks; for otherwise, he asked himself, how could Viry have maintained such large forces?

Though some say that he had been secretly stirred up by the aforesaid John of Burgundy, who cherished a grudge (Gallice, a "milk-tooth") against him of old time, owing to the divisions between the Orleans and the Burgundian parties.

Louis de Bourbon, however, acting on the former theory, made a powerful military demonstration against the Duke of Savoy, who, being overawed by this, said that the war was none of his making, and agreed, on

¹ Louis II. de Bourbon; fought bravely against the English; died 1410.

demand, to surrender the said Viry (who was handed over to Bourbon as prisoner of war) and to pay the costs, so to speak, of all the previous proceedings.

Viry was accordingly imprisoned, as a security for this, and after some time, when the affair was settled, released again, but not, we are significantly told, till he had suffered considerably in person and pocket.

There are “two useful warnings” which the reader may draw from this case.

One is—never to allow yourself to be made a cat’s-paw of by any of “the great.” What they do is to design something, but afterwards, when some local trouble or embarrassment prevents their carrying it out, throw you over. The clown fooling pantaloons on the boards is simply nothing to it; though the case of Yvoy, the young Genlis, as they called him, illustrates the abuse pretty well. He (Yvoy) collected 4,000 trusty Frenchmen to march against the Duke of Alva in Flanders, but was surprised and defeated by the said Duke, and most of his forces killed or taken prisoners, with their leader, who was imprisoned and executed. The Duke of Alva then sent at once to demand of King Charles *if he had sent them*.

He answered, “No, of course not.” How absurd just for a little blunder like that to make an enemy of the King of Spain, when one little disavowal would, like charity, cover all!

But supposing the raid had been a success, and De Genlis had conquered some fine towns in Flanders—as seemed very likely at the moment, and there had been no failure and defeat—well, can we doubt that in that case . . . both he and his august employer would have looked upon the thing differently? Here be questions.

This, it is true, is not duelling. It is part of that

large unwritten chapter—the history of what might have been.

So also is the melancholy career of the Seigneur d'Hallot, author of an ill-fated enterprise on the Castle of Angiers, which failed completely. He was disavowed by the authority who had engaged him to do it, and would have been very glad to see him succeed, and ignominiously put to death by the public executioner.¹

Louis XI., we hardly need to be told, was a past-master at all these devices. If the little plans worked well, no one more grateful than he; if ill, he would deny all complicity like the very devil. Witness the war of Liege which he stirred up against Charles of Burgundy. However, he too sometimes made a fool of himself, and rather missed his stirrup, so to speak, when he let himself be caught at Peronne, and had to serve his great rival like a footman! Even the art of disavowal required care and tact.

The second moral is what we have heard before—that, after all, little men are little men and should not risk their earthenware sides among the big brazen vessels of the great.

Though of course, on the other hand, tyranny is injudicious, and even crushed worms will turn, and possibly stab you in the back on some dark night when you are sauntering home from a Royal ball, thinking of nothing, or perhaps running over the choice of seconds for your next engagement.

¹ In 1585, secretly supported by the Court (Henry III.), d'Hallot made this attempt on the place, then held by the Comte de Brissac for the Catholic League. On its failure, being captured by the citizens, he was broken on the wheel.

Just *one* more anecdote. Does the reader mind? Well, when the Duc d'Archot got out of his prison in the forest of Vincennes in the reign of Henry II., the Countess of Senignan¹ was accused and strongly suspected of having assisted his escape, and provided him with the wherewithal, being a near relative.

You can guess how irritated M. the Constable was at this incident, as the prisoner had been carefully detained by him as an exchange for his son M. de Montmorency, who was then a captive in Flanders.

The Countess accordingly was by Royal order arrested and imprisoned and Commissioners appointed to try her; in fact, she was in considerable danger even for her life had not Messieurs de Guise and their brother the Cardinal taken up her cause with such energy and success that she had no more than a good fright. But some time afterwards, at the wedding of the Queen of Spain and Mme. of Savoy, Montmorency was presiding at the magnificent festivities and balls which followed, and his business as master of the ceremonies was to make room and distribute places for the usual crowd of guests.

The Prince Portian, son of the aforesaid Countess de Senignan, filled with anger and spite on his mother's account, refused to give place when requested, on which there ensued a small fracas between him and young Montmorency. But, as the reader will already fear in this late stage of our duelling anecdotage, *nothing came of it*, and the parties were ordered by royal mandate not to exchange a single word (*ne sonner plus mot*) on the subject of imprisonments, escapes, or places at table, so as to disturb the festivities or set a bad example to the numerous

¹ See De Thou's History (1558); and Estienne, *Apologie d'Herodote*, ch. xvi. (says Duchat), a reference I cannot verify.

foreigners present. No one seriously blamed Montmorency, for a master of the ceremonies, on such an occasion, if a guest will not give place, must compel him to do so—like a sergeant-at-arms in the House of Commons—by a reasonable display of force.

On the other hand, as we all know with school-masters when “keeping order,” there are some who manage everything by a word or look. Such, once more, was the great Guise, and his son, the last of the famous men of his time.

They had such a manner, such a way with them, such a fashion of courteously throwing a civil phrase to right or left, that, in a case like the above, people always made way of themselves, and were fifty times more orderly than if they were treated to a lot of impatient objurgation and violence.

In the case considered, the parties, it has been said, were reconciled. It is true that Prince Portian had, in fact, the higher rank, but nevertheless, with the Constable’s immense influence at Court, his son was scarcely to be reckoned in an inferior position, and, in any case, Portian was quite wrong to cross him in the exercise of his duty. As to their actually fighting, the King had much too distinct an idea of the privilege of his palace to allow that.

Some years later, by the way, the Prince incurred some censure for running to the very opposite extreme, seeing he became so attached to Montmorency as even to accompany and support him on the occasion when he went and affronted the Cardinal of Lorraine and the last M. de Guise (then a mere feeble stripling) in the Rue St. Denis, at Paris.

The occasion was that the Cardinal came in with his

usual guard of mounted arquebusiers, which accompanied him by the King's special leave ever since the conspiracy of Amboise, and was led by the gallant Captain la Chancée.

Montmorency wished to prevent his (the Cardinal's) entering in this fashion with arms and a guard, and sent a message twice over to say he would attack him if it was attempted.

The Cardinal, however, insisted, and marched in, on which Montmorency mounted his horse with his guard and a company of friends, and finding the enemy already in the streets, *charged them*, M. the Prince, forgetful of his past rancour, leading the attack, which produced great disorder.

The Cardinal had to dismount and take refuge in the house of some citizen, or he might have been killed, being detested on account of his religion; in fact, there were plenty of Huguenots there who would have asked nothing better.

This event¹ produced a great scandal all over France, especially at the Court, which was then in Provence.

Brantome, who was just then returning from his expedition to Barbary, Portugal, and Spain, was in a position to know exactly what the King and Queen and the grandees of the time thought and said of it, and the Constable himself was considerably shocked. His Majesty sent M. de Rambouillet to the Cardinal, and both parties stated their case to him, with no lack of arguments, too lengthy to report here. And even Condé, the head of the Huguenot party, was much offended; so also M. de Montpensier and other princes.

At last their angry passions were appeased by the

¹ Described more fully in the Life of the Constable Montmorency *Capitaines Francois*, Disc. 62.

tact of the Queen mother; the Prince Portian being much blamed for having in so perfectly frivolous a manner, joined in affronting the Guises from whom he had received two such signal favours as those described above, and a third, his marriage with Mme. de Nevers, one of the fairest, wisest, richest, and most virtuous of French women, who might, for that matter, have looked higher, as she did, in fact, afterwards marry the great Guise. She had been brought up by the Duchess Dowager at her father's special request. Brantome knew her in her youth, and knew that the Cardinal had contrived the match. As an intimate friend of Portian's he could only regret that the Prince's fine reputation should be tarnished by such ingratitude.

It was, of course, religious fanaticism which bewitched and misled him, as it has so many others. But the Prince de Conde, to our certain knowledge, spoke to him very plainly about it.

If we are to believe the legend of St. Nicaise, a pretended bastard of the house of Guise, he was paid out for it two years later, as the Prince had him murdered in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's. He died regretted by many estimable courtiers, and our author, having little else to do at this point, drops "several tears" on his grave.

One of these grandees whose "little ways" with inferiors were not to be imitated, a man, in fact, with a savage tongue in his head, was (the late) M. Louis de Montpensier,¹ a prince of the most violent temper. It

¹ Fr. de Bourbon, Duc de Montpensier (1539-1592), known as the "Prince Dauphin," son of Louis II.; distinguished himself at the siege of Rouen (1562) and the battles of Jarnac, Moncontour, and Ivry as a partisan of Henry IV.

LE MANANT.

LE MAHEVRE .



KNIGHT AND PEASANT.

Frontispiece from : *Dialogue du maheustre et du manant*. 8vo, 1594.

[To face p. 234.

was at Mirebeau on some occasion in the "Third Civil Wars" that he blackguarded the young d'Auzances in such a scandalous manner. Afterwards M. de Biron, a near relative of the latter, took the matter up, and some sort of apology passed.

But d'Auzances retired from the army, and many believed that he died more of the burning shame and chagrin of that incident than of anything else.

For, as Francis I. was so fond of saying, there was no wild beast half so dangerous as a French gentleman nursing a grievance.

Another time it was a respectable Italian gentleman at the siege of Rochelle who had to swallow a similar outrage.

But Montpensier had perhaps some excuse in the case of M. de Serré, before Lusignan, when the latter, having been captured, was brought into his presence, and the Prince asked—doubtless with some duly emphatic oath—for whom he (De Serré) was holding the place in this fashion.

De Serré had no sooner answered, "For the King," than Montpensier flung a silver candlestick at his head.

"*What!*" he cried, "am I a traitor and rebel that you dare to tell me you are holding a place against me—*for the King?*"¹

"Do you call yourself one of his servants? And I should like to know what I am here for except to make war upon the King's enemies, and string them all up—and you first of the lot! Away with him."

Language of this sort—allowing for the political misapprehension prevalent during the Religious Civil

¹ On the complexity of these questions see the famous *Dialogue au Maheustre et du Manant* (knight and peasant)—1594—from which the woodcut is taken.

Wars¹ was all appropriate enough. Princes are expected to know how to set down "such impudence as that!"

The unfortunate M. d'Auzances had the misfortune to be *gourmandé*, but this time on most insufficient grounds by the Cardinal de Lorraine,² who by virtue of his bishopric of Metz, had tried to annex to his possessions the town of Marsant. D'Auzances, either on his own initiative or at the bidding of some higher authority, had opposed this manœuvre, and persuaded Salsede, the governor, to hold it for the King, though it had formerly been under the authority of the Guises.

D'Auzances was accordingly summoned before the King at the instance of the Cardinal, who then and there, in the Royal presence, heaped insults upon him, even going so far (though we should have thought he would have begun there) as to call him a *petit gallant*, a term conveying more to his hearers than it does to the modern reader.

D'Auzances replied that *petit gallant* or not, he (the Cardinal) had not thought it beneath His Eminence to seek an alliance with the D'Auzances family for one of his nephews, and that as to his other expressions, they were an insult not to himself, but to the King, who allowed his servants, when summoned before his Council, to defend their actions freely, and then to be abused for it.

At this the King, who probably wished to evade all

¹ "Of what party are you?" asks the Knight.

"I am a Catholic."

"So am I; but are you of the King's party, or of that of the Princess of Lorraine?"

"You ask too many distinctions. I can only say I am a Catholic, as my fathers were," &c.

² Louis de Guise, assassinated 1588.

responsibility in the matter, was much offended. The affair, like so many of these unsatisfying differences, was "hushed up" for the moment.

But M. d'Auzances had his revenge. He never troubled himself about the affairs of Marsant again.

The incident illustrates the manners, political and diplomatic, of the time, and the way in which fierce hatreds were bred and fostered. For the moral, emphasised by Brantome, is simply this, that not the greatest and most insolent and high-handed of great men—whatever he may think of the offended party's social rank and status—can ever regard his enmity as a *quantité négligeable*.

Vengeance was apt to crop up in the most unexpected places, even when there was every barrier of awe and terror, if not divinity, that "doth hedge a King."

Thus, in conclusion, we recall the significant case of Galeazzo Maria, Duke of Milan (son of Sforza), a monster of vice and cruelty, who spared neither the property, the wives nor the daughters, of his subjects, till at last a certain Andrea Lampugnano, exasperated by an injustice done to his brother in the matter of some benefice, formed a conspiracy to kill him, which he finally did, under the pretence of speaking to him, in a church, where four or five good stabs with a dagger settled all accounts.

We are to realize, however, that this extreme step was not arrived at without considerable preparation. The assassin, long deterred by the dignity and personal beauty (such force has beauty) of his sovereign, had resort to a singular method of rehearsal. And, incidentally, Brantome's volume ends with a "pun" or

calembour more atrocious in its way than any act of violence he has hitherto recorded.¹

The Signor Lampugnano had a picture of the Duke painted to the life, at which he practised assassination at home, during all his unoccupied hours, till the act became quite easy and natural. Then approaching his victim, one day, without a trace of his former hesitation and embarrassment, he gave him "seven good stabs in the proper style," and stretched His Grace dead upon the earth. Such, says Brantome, was the success of these "Essays"—in murder as a fine art—with which he thinks not any of those of the *Sieur. de Montaigne* could compare.²

¹ Not that he does not, if the reader will believe it, promise us another volume, which was to be concerned with "challenges, accords, and satisfactions," for all the world as if we had heard nothing of these tiresome ceremonies. But few who have read so far as this will not peruse with immense relief the last footnote of the learned Duchat: "*On n' a point ce second livre que promettait Brantome.*"

² The French editor of the text, M. Henry de Penè, is moved to exclaim not unnaturally at this solitary reference to the most famous writer of the time, who, by the way, might have been cited to more advantage upon the subject in hand. Montaigne strongly condemns the practice of employing "seconds, thirds, and fourths" as cowardly. Of old time, he reflects, men fought duels. Nowadays we have encounters or battles, and he refers to the duel in which his brother, the *Sieur. de Matecolon*, was involved (as described in our text). "We Frenchmen," he adds, "must needs advertise our vices and follies, even go and display them among foreign nations. Put three Frenchmen in the deserts of Lybia, and in three weeks they will be fighting like cats"—a conclusion that seems confirmed by our text (*Montaigne* (1523-92) *Essais* ii. 27).

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